

ENGLISH
POEMS
FROM
CHAUCER
TO
KIPLING
PARROTT & LONG

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ENGLISH POEMS

FROM

CHAUCER TO KIPLING

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EDITED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

BY

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SOMETIME A MASTER IN ENGLISH AT LAWRENCEVILLE SCHOOL

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TO TEACHERS

ALL teachers are of one mind as regards the importance of a continuous study of English literature during the years of preparation for college, as well as throughout the college course. It is generally recognized that the stream of English literature is not a Jordan into which we may dip seven times and depart with new bodies. A close study of the English classics should be not only a means of intellectual development, but should lead to a love of the best books, — a love which shall be to the student as the very breath of his nostrils.

There is room, we believe, in the curricula of secondary schools for a book of poems which shall serve as a link between the earlier studies in English and the work required for entrance to college. It is hoped, also, that this book will be found useful in the freshman year in many colleges as an introduction to the study of English poetry. The brief sketch of English literature prefixed to the volume — which attempts to do no more than to stake off the landmarks — may with profit be studied carefully at the outset by more advanced students.

The work of selection has been difficult. In making these selections we have tried to keep in mind two things: that every poem chosen should be good in itself, and that it should be suitable for the purpose in hand. In some cases we have omitted an author's most representative poem because it was not suitable for our purpose, which is to

catch the attention and hold the interest of the young student. Unless this is done, time spent in the study of a poem is often worse than useless.

With younger pupils it may be advisable to begin with poems which are easy to understand and which touch the imagination. The ballads seem specially suited to this purpose. These old songs still stir the heart as with the sound of a trumpet. If we teachers of literature can arouse the imagination, quicken the feelings, and refine the taste of our boys and girls, we shall do much towards shaping their characters and sweetening their lives.

Finally, we cannot urge too strongly the importance of assigning passages to be memorized. This should be done with every lesson, and not spasmodically. By memorizing poems, or parts of poems, the pupil may lay up for himself treasures — a store of words, thoughts, and images — which will become more precious as the years go by.

We are indebted for valuable aid in the preparation of this volume to Prof. Geo. M. Harper of Princeton University, Prof. G. L. Kittredge of Harvard University, and to the Rev. E. L. Gulick, Mr. C. B. Newton, and Mr. C. Harlow Raymond, of the English department at Lawrenceville School. The notes, which attempt to do little more than to explain or interpret, have been drawn from so many sources that it would be a hopeless task to make particular mention. Our thanks are due to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons for permission to print Stevenson's *Wandering Willie* and *Requiem* from "Underwoods," and to Messrs. Longmans, Green, & Co. for permission to print Morris's *Riding Together* from "The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems."

T. M. P.

A. W. L.

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AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY

IN a brief sketch of the development of English poetry we may neglect entirely the poems written before the Norman conquest of England. These old English poems are written in a form of speech which it is now impossible to read without previous study, as of a foreign language. The history of English poetry begins for us with Geoffrey Chaucer. His work, composed for the most part in the last quarter of the fourteenth century (1375-1400), portrays the life, character, and mode of thought of the Englishman of the Middle Ages at a time when that period was just drawing to its close. Chaucer is at once the last great product of the days of Norman-French chivalry and the forerunner of the long and noble line of truly English poets.

The debt that English literature in general, and English poetry in particular, owes to Chaucer is altogether incalculable. He did much to weld the jarring elements of French and English together into one language, and he was the first to employ this language as a medium for the utterance of wise and noble thoughts in flowing and harmonious verse. He was, moreover, the first true artist in English poetry, shaping the stories that he borrowed from older or from foreign writers to suit his own end, the delighting of his English readers. All English poets from Spenser down to Swinburne have been glad to acknowledge the debt they owed to "Father Chaucer."

Chaucer has been called the day-star of English poetry, but the full day did not dawn for more than a century after his death. During the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries England was distracted with wars, foreign and civil, and her intellectual energies were occupied with shaking off the traditions of the Middle Ages and acquiring the new learning of the Renaissance. The great struggle, moreover, through which the nation passed during its conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism diverted its mind from the production of pure literature. It was not indeed until this conversion was accomplished and the great Protestant queen, Elizabeth, firmly seated on her throne that the new poetry broke forth in England.

The leader of the new school was Edmund Spenser (1552-1599). The publication of his *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579 may be said to mark the true beginning of modern English poetry. For Spenser belongs to modern times as Chaucer does to the Middle Ages. His great poem, *The Faerie Queene*, deals, to be sure, with the giants, dragons, and enchanters, the brave knights and fair ladies of mediæval romance, but the ideas that underlie his allegory are those of his own day; and there are countless allusions throughout the poem to the wars and politics of his time. Spenser's one aim was to present the ideal of holiness, temperance, courtesy, and justice toward which a Christian gentleman was bound to strive. There is at times an almost Puritanic severity concealed beneath the gentle beauty of his verse, like the iron hand beneath the velvet glove. Spenser's chief characteristics as a poet are his passionate love of beauty and his fine gift for musical utterance, and it is by these two qualities that he has profoundly influenced all subsequent English poetry.

The great achievement of the Elizabethan age was, of course, the drama. Never before nor since did the theaters

play so important a part in the national life of England. The Elizabethan drama was a true reflection of its age, — demonstrative, passionate, changeful, passing rapidly from tears to laughter, and from coarse jests to finespun sentiment. Almost every form of the drama was put upon the boards, from ghastly tragedies of blood to witty comedies of social life, and from stately imitations of the classic drama to the characteristic chronicle-plays which introduced upon the stage the leading figures of English history. There were masques in which the main attractions were the music and dancing and splendid scenery; there were farces in which the broad humor of the clowns carried the pit by storm; but as a rule in the Elizabethan theater the play was the thing, and the play was some action, sad or merry, but always interesting, and almost always told in lovely poetry.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) may be considered as the founder of this poetic and romantic drama. His brilliant genius was essentially tragic; the few humorous passages that occur in his dramas are little better than rough horse play. Shakespeare, on the other hand, who was born in the same year, but all of whose best work was done after Marlowe's early death, was as great a master of comedy as of tragedy, the greatest master indeed of the drama that the world has ever seen. He did not reach this eminence by any sudden effort, but by a long and arduous struggle. He was an actor before he became an author, and his plays show an unequaled knowledge of the necessities and possibilities of the stage. They were written to be acted rather than to be read. Many of them, indeed, remained unprinted till after his death, although there is abundant contemporary evidence as to their popularity on the stage. But Shakespeare was much more than a successful dramatist; he possessed a knowledge of the human heart unequaled

by any author before or since, and it is to this knowledge more perhaps than to any other quality that the apparent immortality of his fame is due. Moreover, Shakespeare is, in the mere matter of expression, the greatest of English poets. His songs and sonnets alone would entitle him to a high place among lyric poets; but his peculiar glory lies in the wonderful outbursts of poetry with which his dramas are starred. His sensitiveness to all impressions from without, his creative imagination, and his unrivaled power over the richest of modern languages, all combined to make his work different in kind rather than in degree from that of his fellows. And, at the same time, his dramatic instinct enabled him to fit these outbursts to the occasion and to the character, and his wide breadth of human sympathy allowed him to identify himself with personalities so various as Romeo, Shylock, Hamlet, Othello, and Cleopatra. Shakespeare remains, then, the supreme figure in the greatest age of English literature, the master poet as well as the master dramatist of modern times.

Shakespeare's friend, Ben Jonson, who outlived him almost as long as Shakespeare outlived Marlowe, saw the flowering time of the drama rapidly drawing to its close. Jonson himself did not a little to hasten the decline of the drama; for he attempted to confine it within strict laws, preferred to people his plays with extravagant caricatures rather than with the living, breathing people of Shakespeare, and too often relied upon his extensive learning rather than upon his natural genius. For twenty years after the death of Shakespeare, Jonson was the most prominent poet and dramatist in England, and his example was unfortunately only too powerful. Within five years after his death the theaters were closed by the Puritans.

John Milton (1608-1674) connects the age of Elizabeth with that of the triumph of Puritan principles. In early

life he was a devoted student of Shakespeare and of the poet whom he so fitly calls "our sage and serious Spenser." His early poems, though showing plainly the influence of Puritan ideals, are still, so far as form and expression go, true products of the Elizabethan age. His later works, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, all written after the final overthrow of Puritanism as a political force, are poems of the lost cause. Not only in subject-matter, but also in form and method of treatment, they are immeasurably removed from the romantic allegory of the *Faerie Queene* and the broadly human dramas of Shakespeare.

But Milton's later works appeared in an age that cared nothing for him and little for his predecessors. With the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, a new age of English poetry began, an age often improperly dignified with the title of classical. It was an age of revolt, not so much against the passionate poetry of the true Elizabethans as against the fantastic absurdities of their successors, the so-called *metaphysical* poets. These writers, Donne, Crashaw, Cowley, and others are forgotten to-day by all but professed students of English literature, and it has not seemed worth while to include a single specimen of their work in this collection. But it is difficult, without some knowledge of the excesses which they committed, to understand the causes of the change in the subject-matter and the style of poetry which took place in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The new poetry was the poetry of common sense as opposed to the wildness of an unchecked imagination. It addressed itself to man's intellect rather than to his emotions. In style it insisted upon regularity and correctness, and for the most part expressed itself in the smooth, evenly balanced heroic couplet. It soon abandoned the Elizabethan forms of the drama and the lyric for didactic and satiric poetry. Didacticism and satire, it may be said,

are prosaic rather than poetic forms of literature, and as a matter of fact the prose of the period is distinctly better than its verse. But between Shakespeare's death and the Restoration so many extravagancies had been committed in the name of poetry that some such reform was necessary if poetry was to retain its hold upon the general body of men.

The great poets of this period are John Dryden (1631-1700) and Alexander Pope (1688-1744). Their successor, Dr. Johnson (1709-1784), endeavored both by his poems and by his criticisms to maintain the traditions of this school. But another change was coming over English poetry. The romantic spirit, so long exiled from English verse, began about the middle of the eighteenth century to show its head again. We catch its first notes in Johnson's contemporaries, Thomas Gray (1716-1771) and Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774). The love of nature, the familiarity with country sights and sounds, the loving sympathy with the hard lives and fortunes of the poor, which appear in the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* and *The Deserted Village*, are notes wholly alien to the so-called classical poets. On the other hand, the carefully polished form, the deliberately restrained imagination, and the direct appeal to average common sense—although to a common sense tinged with emotion—which mark these poems, show that their authors were living in a time of transition, and that the full day of romanticism in poetry had not yet dawned.

The first, but by no means most important, poet of the romantic school is William Cowper (1731-1800). The circumstances of his life forced him to reside in the country, and his poetry is full of the gentle influences of country sights and sounds. "My descriptions," he said, "are all from nature; not one of them second-handed." He discarded the elaborate balance and polish of the old school

in favor of a simple directness of expression in keeping with the objects of which he wrote. His far greater contemporary, Robert Burns (1759-1796), occupies a singular position in English literature. In his English verse he is a weak shadow of some minor members of the school of Pope; but his Scotch poems, which alone are worthy of consideration, show him to be a singer such as had not been known since the Elizabethan period. He has Shakespeare's sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men; he revives the long-forgotten lyric of love; and he gives fervid expression to the new hopes for liberty, equality, and fraternity begotten of the great movement of the French Revolution.

Probably the most important of all the poets of this time in his influence upon his contemporaries and upon subsequent English poetry was William Wordsworth (1770-1850). In his work we find a complete breach with the old traditions of poetical composition. He deliberately renounced all allegiance to the school of Pope, and set up a new standard of poetry, both as regards subject-matter and form. The proper themes for poetry were to be drawn, he held, from the contemplation of nature or from the simple, natural lives of men uncorrupted by the artificial atmosphere of towns. The language of poetry he considered to differ in no respect from that of prose except with reference to the metre. Many of Wordsworth's best poems are in flat contradiction to this theory; but, at the same time, he rendered English poetry an immense service by clearing it of the unnatural and affected diction which had gathered about it in the last hundred years, and by recalling poets to the true objects of their contemplation, nature and the heart of man.

Closely allied with Wordsworth is his friend and companion, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). Coleridge

wrote comparatively little poetry, but what he wrote was of great importance. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is the most perfect expression of the new element of the supernatural which had found its way into English poetry. Readers of the time of Pope or Johnson would have considered this poem unreal, unnatural, and therefore ridiculous, if not disgusting. His unfinished poem, *Christabel*, may be said to have set the fashion of poetry in which Scott and Byron achieved such great success, - the romantic story embodied in a simple, irregular, but very charming metre.

In the narrative poems of Walter Scott (1771-1832) we see poetry turning with delight toward the romantic Middle Ages, which the critics of the eighteenth century had despised as times of darkness and superstition. Scott's charming lyric gift, too, proves him a singer of the new school, and the very haste and carelessness of much of his work shows how far he had departed from the old standards of poetry.

The most dazzling figure of the romantic school is, of course, Lord Byron (1788-1824). His youth, his rank, his genius, made him for a time the idol of the reading world in England, and completed the triumph of romantic principles. Byron's best work, however, is not to be found in the metrical tales which first brought him into prominence, but in his later and maturer poems. In these he expressed his own passionate emotions, love of liberty, hatred of oppression, scorn of conventional morality, and self-pity for his shattered life, with a sincerity and strength unknown before in English poetry. His friend and sometime associate in exile, Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), was a far truer artist in poetry, and one of the greatest of all English lyric poets. Like Byron, Shelley hated the tyranny which, after the fall of Napoleon, was engaged in

trampling out the surviving sparks of liberty upon the Continent, and, like Byron, he broke entirely with the established law and order of his native land; like Byron, too, his poems are filled with a self-pity which has provoked the scorn of harsh critics. But Shelley had what Byron lacked, a devotion to the noblest ideals of humanity, — to purity, truth, and love. His sympathy with nature, too, was far more close and intimate than Byron's. Furthermore, through his best work there glows a fervent genius which seems little less than inspiration.

John Keats (1795-1821) is sometimes grouped with Byron and Shelley as the last of the romantic poets; but his connection with them is a pure accident of time. For the political and social questions in which they were so deeply interested he cared nothing at all. He deliberately turned away from the harsh struggles of the world to slake his thirst for beauty at the springs of Grecian legend and mediæval romance. His early death cut short a career of perhaps the noblest promise in English literature since Marlowe's day. His best poems, all composed in the last year or two of his life, are marvels of poetic beauty, and have exercised an immense influence over the poets of the succeeding age.

The age of romanticism closed with the death of Byron in 1824; the Victorian era may be said to open with the publication of Tennyson's *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*, in 1830. This age is still too near our own to be summed up in a critical phrase or two, but a few of its characteristics may be pointed out. There was, first of all, no such breach with tradition as marked the culmination of the romantic school. Each of the three greatest Victorian poets, Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892), Robert Browning (1812-1889), and Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), drew large draughts of inspiration from a poet of the preceding age;

but in each there was an original element which far outweighed their borrowings. Tennyson's deep interest in the social and religious problems of his day, Browning's eager sympathy with the strife and struggle of the individual soul and his power of character portrayal, and Arnold's grace and classic beauty of form, are original elements quite wanting in the masters from whom these poets drew.

About the middle of the period, a minor trio of poets, Rossetti (1828-1882), Morris (1834-1896), and Swinburne (1837—), came forward to give utterance to the new æsthetic spirit that was awakening in England, and to breathe into their poetry a mystical passion and a dreamy languor hitherto unknown in English verse. As a whole, the age was, in the matter of form and subject, one of the most diverse and complex in English literature. In spirit it was for the most part serious, deeply occupied with the results of modern scientific discovery, and broadly sympathetic. Its highest achievements in poetry have been the idyllic narrative and nobly meditative poems of Tennyson, the strong and lifelike character studies of Browning, and the masterly elegies of Arnold, along with a large and very admirable body of lyric poetry found not only in the works of these three chief poets, but in that of many of their contemporaries and disciples.

ENGLISH POEMS

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

1340 ?-1400

CHAUCER has been justly called by Dryden the father of modern English poetry, while Spenser speaks of him as "the well of English undefiled." There were many writers of verse in England in Chaucer's time, but none had sufficient breadth of view or charm of style to become such a national literary figure as Chaucer was.

The poet was born and brought up in London, where his father was a wine merchant. That his father was a man of standing is shown by the fact that he and his wife were in attendance upon Edward III and his queen when they went to Flanders in 1338. It was most likely due to his father's connection at court that Chaucer was made a member of the household of Prince Lionel, in which he probably served as a page. From this time on to the end of his life Chaucer was, with some interruptions, connected with the court. It is known that he went at the king's command on no less than seven diplomatic missions to the Continent. He was also appointed collector of wool customs for the port of London, and many more marks of royal favor were bestowed upon him. His wide acquaintance with men and affairs was increased by his service as a soldier in France, his travels in Italy, and his experience while serving as member of Parliament for Kent.

In spite, however, of all his duties as politician, officeholder, diplomat, and courtier, and in spite of his love of "good compaignye," he spent many of his nights in poring over his books,

until his eyes were "dased," and until his head ached from the making of "books, songs, and ditties." He was a wide, but perhaps a desultory, reader, and his pen was ready and fruitful. His best known longer poems are *The Boke of the Duchesse*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, *The Parlement of Foules*, *The Hous of Fame*, *The Legende of Goode Women*, and, greatest of all, *The Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer's most prominent traits are his humor, his shrewdness, his gentle satire, his wide sympathy with life on all its sides, and his very unusual gifts as a story-teller. He was a successful man of affairs, an affable man of the world, and a poet of unsurpassed power in his own field. "If character may be divined by works," says Lowell, "he was a good man, genial, sincere, hearty, temperate of mind, more wise, perhaps, for this world than the next, but thoroughly human, and friendly with God and man."

From

THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE KNIGHT

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
 That fro the tymé that he first bigan
 To ryden out, he loved chivalryé,
 Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
 Ful worthy was he in his lordés werré, 5
 And therto hadde he riden (no man ferré)
 As wel in cristendom as hethenessé,
 And evere honoured for his worthinessé.
 At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonné;
 Ful ofté tyme he hadde the bord bigonné 10
 Aboven allé naciouns in Prucé.

At mortal batailles hadde he been fittené,
 And foughten for our feith at Tramissené

In listés thryés, and ay slayn his foo.
 This ilké worthy knight hadde been also 15
 Somtymé with the lord of Palatyé,
 Ageyn another hethen in Turkyé:
 And everemore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
 And of his port as meek as is a maydé. 20
 He nevere yet no vileinye ne saydé
 In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
 He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
 But for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors were goodé, but he was nat gay. 25
 Of fustian he wered a gipoun
 Al bismotered with his habergeoun.
 For he was late y-come from his viagé,
 And wenté for to doon his pilgrimagé.

THE SQUIRE

With him ther was his sone, a yong squyer,
 A lovyer, and a lusty bacheler,
 With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in pressé.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gessé.
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthé, 5
 And wonderly delivere, and greet of strenghté.
 And he hadde been somtyme in chivachyé,
 In Flaundrés, in Artoys, and Picardyé,
 And born him wel, as of so litel spacé,
 In hope to stonden in his lady gracé. 10
 Embrouded was he, as it were a medé
 Al ful of fresshé floures, whyte and redé.
 Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his goune, with slevés longe and wydé. 15

Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire rydé.
 He coudé songés make, and wel endyté,
 Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryté.
 So hote he lovede, that by nightertalé
 He sleep namore than doth a nightingalé. 20
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table.

THE SHIPMAN

A shipman was ther, woning fer by westé :
 For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthé.
 He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthé,
 In a gowne of falding to the knee.
 A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he 5
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
 The hoté somer had maad his hewe all broun ;
 And, certainly, he was a good felawé.
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawé
 From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep. 10
 Of nycé conscience took he no keep.
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydés,
 His stremés and his daungers him bisydés, 15
 His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenagé,
 Ther nas noon swich from Hullé to Cartagé.
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertaké ;
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shakeé.
 He knew wel alle the havenes, as they weré, 20
 From Gootlond to the cape of Finisteré,
 And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne ;
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayné.

THE PARSON,

A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a povré PERSON of a toun;
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preché; 5
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teché.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofté sythés.
 Ful both were him to cursen for his tythés, 10
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of douté,
 Un-to his povré parisshe abouté
 Of his offring, and eek of his substauncé.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisauncé.
 Wyde was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder, 15
 But he ne lasté nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief to visyté
 The ferreste in his parisshe, moche and lyté,
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf, 20
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughté;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordés caughté;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to
 That if gold rusté, what shal yren do?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we trusté, 25
 No wonder is a lewéd man to rusté;
 And shame it is, if a preest také keep,
 A (spotted) shepherde and a clené sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yivé,
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold livé. 30
 He setté nat his benefice to hyré,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myré,

And ran to London, un-to seynt Poulés,
To seken him a chaunterie for soulés,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholdé ; 35
But dwelte at hoom, and kepté wel his foldé,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie ;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous, 40
Ne of his speché daungerous ne digné,
But in his teching discreet and benigné.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnessé
By good ensample, this was his bisynessé :
But it were any persone obstinat, 45
What so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nonés.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher non is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverencé,
Ne maked him a spyced consciencé, 50
But Cristés lore, and his apostles twelvé,
He taughte, but first he folwed it him-selvé.

OLD ENGLISH BALLADS

THE fifteenth century, so barren of great names in English poetry, was especially rich in the production of popular ballads. These were the poetry of the people, in part composed by wandering minstrels and sung by them at wakes, and fairs, and country holidays, in part the common property of the race and reaching back to old tradition and mythology. Their subjects embraced the whole range of common life. There were ballads on the stirring events of the time, the king's wars, the feuds of the great nobles, the lives and adventures of the beloved outlaws who defied the king's will and baffled the lordly rulers of the common people. There were songs of love, and hate, and jealousy, of battle, murder, and sudden death. And there were many songs of the great world of the supernatural that then lay so near the common life of man, of witches, of fairies, and of ghosts that returned to visit those that loved them.

In the sixteenth century many of these old songs were for the first time committed to writing, printed, and sold about the country by traveling peddlers. Many of them were spoiled in the process. The old simplicity, vigor, and passion were toned down by the pedantic scholars or half-educated printers who prepared them for the press. And so the English ballads, as a rule, are far inferior to those of Scotland, which lingered longer in the mouths of men, — unprinted many of them till Walter Scott, that famous lover of old tradition and romance, gave them to the world in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. It is from this collection that four of the ballads here printed are chosen, and it is to this collection that every lover of the old songs of our ancestors is referred as to one of the fascinating books in English.

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

WHEN Robin Hood and Little John,
Down a down, a down, a down,
Went o'er yon bank of broom,
Said Robin Hood to Little John,
‘We have shot for many a pound: 5
Hey down, a down, a down.

‘But I am not able to shoot one shot more,
My arrows will not flee;
But I have a cousin lives down below,
Please God, she will bleed me.’ 10

Now Robin is to fair Kirkley gone,
As fast as he can win;
But before he came there, as we do hear,
He was taken very ill.

And when that he came to fair Kirkley-hall, 15
He knock'd all at the ring,
But none was so ready as his cousin herself
For to let bold Robin in.

‘Will you please to sit down, cousin Robin,’ she said,
‘And drink some beer with me?’ 20
‘No, I will neither eat nor drink
Till I am blooded by thee.’

‘Well, I have a room, cousin Robin,’ she said,
‘Which you did never see,
And if you please to walk therein, 25
You blooded by me shall be.’

She took him by the lily-white hand,
And led him to a private room,
And there she blooded bold Robin Hood,
Whilst one drop of blood would run. 30

She blooded him in the vein of the arm,
And locked him up in the room ;
There did he bleed all the live-long day,
Until the next day at noon.

He then bethought him of a casement door, 35
Thinking for to be gone ;
He was so weak he could not leap,
Nor he could not get down.

He then bethought him of his bugle-horn,
Which hung low down to his knee ; 40
He set his horn unto his mouth,
And blew out weak blasts three.

Then Little John, when hearing him,
As he sat under the tree,
'I fear my master is near dead, 45
He blows so wearily.'

Then Little John to fair Kirkley is gone.
As fast as he can dri'e ;
But when he came to Kirkley-hall,
He broke locks two or three: 50

Until he came bold Robin to,
Then he fell on his knee:
'A boon, a boon,' cries Little John,
'Master, I beg of thee.'

‘What is that boon,’ quoth Robin Hood, 55
‘Little John, thou begs of me?’
‘It is to burn fair Kirkley-hall,
And all their nunnery.’

‘Now nay, now nay,’ quoth Robin Hood,
‘That boon I’ll not grant thee ; 60
I never hurt woman in all my life,
Nor man in woman’s company.

‘I never hurt fair maid in all my time,
Nor at my end shall it be ;
But give me my bent bow in my hand, 65
And a broad arrow I’ll let flee,
And where this arrow is taken up
There shall my grave digg’d be.

‘Lay me a green sod under my head,
And another at my feet ; 70
And lay my bent bow by my side,
Which was my music sweet ;
And make my grave of gravel and green,
Which is most right and meet.

‘Let me have length and breadth enough, 75
With a green sod under my head ;
That they may say, when I am dead,
Here lies bold Robin Hood.’

These words they readily promis’d him,
Which did bold Robin please ; 80
And there they buried bold Robin Hood,
Near to the fair Kirklèys.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE

- It fell about the Lammas tide,
 When the muir-men win their hay,
 The doughty Douglas bound him to ride
 Into England, to drive a prey.
- He chose the Gordons and the Graemes, 5
 With them the Lindesays, light and gay,
 But the Jardines would not with him ride,
 And they rue it to this day.
- And he has burn'd the dales of Tyne,
 And part of Bambroughshire; 10
 And three good towers on Reidswire fells,
 He left them all on fire.
- And he march'd up to Newcastle,
 And rode it round about;
 "O wher's the lord of this castle, 15
 Or wher's the lady o't?" —
- But up spake proud lord Percy, then,
 And O but he spake hie!
 "I am the lord of this castle,
 My wife's the lady gay." — 20
- "If thou'rt the lord of this castle,
 Sae well it pleases me!
 For, ere I cross the Border fells,
 The tane of us shall dee." —
- He took a lang spear in his hand, 25
 Shod with metal free,
 And for to meet the Douglas there,
 He rode right furiouslie.

But O how pale his lady look'd,
Frae aff the castle wa',
When down before the Scottish spear,
She saw proud Percy fa'. 30

"Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I wad hae had you, flesh and fell;
But your sword sall gae wi' me." 35

"But gae ye up to Otterbourne,
And wait there dayis three;
And, if I come not ere three dayis end,
A fause knight ca' ye me." — 40

"The Otterbourne's a bonny burn;
'T is pleasant there to be;
But there is nought at Otterbourne
To feed my men and me.

"The deer runs wild on hill and dale,
The birds fly wild from tree to tree;
But there is neither bread nor kale,
To fend my men and me. 45

"Yet I will stay at Otterbourne,
Where you shall welcome be;
And, if you come not at three dayis end,
A fause lord I'll ca' thee." — 50

"Thither will I come," proud Percy said,
"By the might of Our Lady!"
"There will I bide thee," said the Douglas,
"My troth I plight to thee." — 55

They lighted high on Otterbourne,
 Upon the bent sae brown ;
 They lighted high on Otterbourne,
 And threw their pallions down. 60

And he that had a bonnie boy,
 Sent out his horse to grass ;
 And he that had not a bonnie boy,
 His ain servant he was.

But up then spake a little page, 65
 Before the peep of dawn —
 “O waken ye, waken ye, my good lord,
 For Percy’s hard at hand.” —

“Ye lie, ye lie, ye liar loud !
 Sae loud I hear you lie : 70
 For Percy had not men yestreen
 To dight my men and me.

“But I have dreamed a dreary dream.
 Beyond the Vale of Skye ;
 I saw a dead man win a fight, 75
 And I think that man was I.”

He belted on his guid braid sword,
 And to the field he ran ;
 But he forgot the helmet good
 That should have kept his brain. 80

When Percy with the Douglas met,
 I wat he was fu’ fain !
 They swakked their swords till sair they swat,
 And the blood ran down like rain.

But Percy, with his good broad sword, 85
That could so sharply wound,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
Till he fell to the ground.

Then he called on his little foot-page,
And said — “Run speedilie, 90
And fetch my ain dear sister’s son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery.”

“My nephew good,” the Douglas said,
“What recks the death of one !
Last night I dreamed a dreary dream, 95
And I ken the day’s thy ain.

“My wound is deep ; I fain would sleep ;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me by the braken bush
That grows on yonder lilye lee. 100

“O bury me by the braken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken,
That ere a kindly Scot lies here.”

He lifted up that noble lord, 105
Wi’ the saut tears in his ee ;
He hid him in the braken bush,
That his merrie-men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinders flew, 110
But mony a gallant Englishman,
Ere day the Scotsmen slew.

The Gordons good, in English blood,
 They steep'd their hose and shoon;
 The Lindsays flew like fire about, 115
 Till all the fray was done.

The Percy and Montgomery met,
 That either of other were fain;
 They swapped swords, and they twa swat,
 And aye the blood ran down between. 120

"Now yield thee, yield thee, Percy," he said,
 "Or else I vow I'll lay thee low!"
 "To whom must I yield," quoth earl Percy,
 "Now that I see it must be so?"

"Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun, 125
 Nor yet shalt thou yield to me;
 But yield ye to the braken bush,
 That grows upon yon lilye lee!" —

"I will not yield to a braken bush,
 Nor yet will I yield to a brier; 130
 But I would yield to earl Douglas
 Or sir Hugh the Montgomery, if he were here."

As soon as he knew it was Montgomery,
 He struck his sword's point in the gronde;
 The Montgomery was a courteous knight, 135
 And quickly took him by the honde.

This deed was done at Otterbourne
 About the breaking of the day;
 Earl Douglas was buried at the braken bush,
 And the Percy led captive away. 140

KINMONT WILLIE

O HAVE ye na heard o' fause Sakelde ?

O have ye na heard o' the keen lord Scroope ?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Haribee to hang him up ?

Had Willie had but twenty men, 5
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his companie.

They band his legs beneath his steed,
They tied his hands behind his back ! 10
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
And they brought him over the Liddel-rack.

They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
And also thro' the Carlisle sands ;
They brought him to Carlisle castell, 15
To be at my lord Scroope's commands.

"My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow ?
Or answer by the Border law ?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch ?" — 20

"Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver !
There 's never a Scott shall set thee free:
Before ye cross my castle yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o' me."

"Fear na ye that, my lord," quo' Willie : 25
"By the faith o' my body, lord Scroope," he said,
"I never yet lodged in a hostelrie,
But I paid my lawing before I gaed." —

Now word is gane to the bauld keeper,
 In Branksome Ha', where that he lay, 30
 That lord Scroope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie,
 Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
 He garr'd the red wine spring on hie —
 "Now Christ's curse on my head" he said, 35
 "But avenged of lord Scroope I'll be!

"O is my basnet a widow's curch?
 Or my lance a wand of the willow tree?
 Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand,
 That an English lord should lightly me? 40

"And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
 Against the truce of border tide?
 And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
 Is keeper on the Scottish side?

"And have they e'en ta'en him, Kinmont Willie, 45
 Withouten either dread or fear?
 And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
 Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

"O were there war between the lands,
 As well I wot that there is none, 50
 I would slight Carlisle castell high,
 Though it were builded of marble stone.

"I would set that castell in a lowe,
 And sloken it with English blood!
 There's never a man in Cumberland, 55
 Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

“ But since nae war ’s between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be ;
I ’ll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be ! ” 60

He has call’d him forty marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except sir Gilbert Elliot, call’d
The laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has call’d him forty marchmen bauld, 65
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch,
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.

There were five and five before them a’,
Wi’ hunting horns and bugles bright : 70
And five and five came wi’ Buccleuch,
Like warden’s men, array’d for fight.

And five and five, like a mason gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie ;
And five and five like broken men ; 75
And so they reach’d the Woodhouselee.

And as we cross’d the Bateable land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o’ men that we met wi’,
Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde ? 80

“ Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen ? ”
Quo’ fause Sakelde ; “ come tell to me ! ” —
“ We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespass’d on the Scots countrie.”

"Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men?" 85

Quo' fause Sakelde; "come tell me true!"

"We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi' the bauld Buccleuch."

"Where are ye gaun, ye mason lads,
Wi' a' your ladders, lang and hie?" — 90

"We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee." —

"Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?"
Quo' fause Sakelde; "come tell to me!" —
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band, 95
And nevir a word of lear had he.

"Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row-footed outlaws, stand!" quo' he;
The nevir a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust the lance through his fause bodie. 100

Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross'd;
The water was great, and mickle of spait,
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.

And when we reached the Staneshaw-bank, 105
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the laird garr'd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw; 110
But 't was wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castle wa';

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
 'Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
 To mount the first before us a'. 115

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
 And flung him down upon the lead —
Had there not been peace between our lands,
 Upon the other side thou hadst gaed! — 120

“Now sound out trumpets!” quo' Buccleuch;
 “Let's waken lord Scroope right merrilie!”
Then loud the warden's trumpet blew —
 “O wha dare meddle wi' me?”

Then speedilie to work we gaed,
 And raised the slogan ane and a', 125
And cut a hole through a sheet of lead,
 And so we wan to the castle ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
 Had won the house wi' bow and spear; 130
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
 That put a thousand in sic a stear!

Wi' coulters, and wi' forehammers,
 We garr'd the bars bang merrilie,
Until we came to the inner prison, 135
 Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

And when we cam to the lower prison
 Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie —
“O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
 Upon the morn that thou's to die?” 140

“O I sleep saft, and I wake aft ;
 It's lang since sleeping was fley'd frae me !
 Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
 And a' gude fellows that speir for me.”

Then Red Rowan has hente him up, 145
 The starkest man in Teviotdale —
 “Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
 Till of my lord Scroope I take farewell.

“Farewell, farewell, my gude lord Scroope !
 My gude lord Scroope, farewell !” he cried — 150
 “I'll pay you for my lodging mail,
 When first we meet on the border side.” —

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
 We bore him down the ladder lang ;
 At every stride Red Rowan made, 155
 I wot the Kinmont's airns play'd clang !

“O mony a time,” quo' Kinmont Willie,
 “I have ridden horse baith wild and wud ;
 But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
 I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode. 160

“And mony a time,” quo' Kinmont Willie,
 “I've prick'd a horse out oure the furs ;
 But since the day I back'd a steed,
 I never wore sic cumbrous spurs !” —

We scarce had won Staneshaw-bank, 165
 When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
 And a thousand men on horse and foot,
 Cam wi' the keen lord Scroope down

Buccleuch has turn'd to Eden Water,
 Even where it flowed frae bank to brim, 170
 And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
 And safely swam them through the stream.

He turn'd him on the other side,
 And at lord Scroope his glove flung he —
 "If ye lik na my visit in merry England, 175
 In fair Scotland come visit me!"

All sore astonish'd stood lord Scroope,
 He stood as still as rock of stane;
 He scarcely dared to trow his eyes,
 When through the water he had gane. 180

"He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
 Or else his mother a witch maun be;
 I wadna have ridden that wan water
 For a' the gowd in Christentie."

SIR PATRICK SPENS

THE king sits in Dunfermline towne,
 Drinking the blude-red wine;
 "O whare will I get a skeely skipper,
 To sail this new ship of mine?"

O up and spake an eldern knight, 5
 Sat at the king's right knee, —
 "Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
 That ever sailed the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter
 And seal'd it with his hand, 10
 And sent it to sir Patrick Spens,
 Was walking on the strand.

“To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway o’er the faem;
 The king’s daughter of Noroway,
 ’T is thou maun bring her hame.” 15

The first word that sir Patrick read
 Sae loud loud laughed he;
 The neist word that sir Patrick read,
 The tear blinded his ee. 20

“O wha is this has done this deed,
 And tauld the king o’ me,
 To send us out, at this time of the year,
 To sail upon the sea?

“Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
 Our ship must sail the faem;
 The king’s daughter of Noroway,
 ’T is we must fetch her hame.” — 25

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn,
 Wi’ a’ the speed they may;
 They hae landed in Noroway,
 Upon a Wodensday. 30

They hadna been a week, a week,
 In Noroway, but twae,
 When that the lords o’ Noroway
 Began aloud to say, — 35

“Ye Scottishmen spend a’ our king’s goud,
 And a’ our queenis fee.” —
 “Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
 Fu’ loud I hear ye lie: 40

“For I brought as much white monie,
As gane my men and me,
And I brought a half-fou of gude red goud,
Out o’er the sea wi’ me.

“Make ready, make ready, my merrymen a’! 45
Our gude ship sails the morn,” —
“Now, ever alake, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm!

“I saw the new moon, late yestreen,
Wi’ the auld moon in her arm; 50
And, if we gang to sea, master,
I fear we ’ll come to harm.”

They hadna sail’d a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud, 55
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the top-masts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves cam o’er the broken ship,
Till a’ her sides were torn. 60

“O where will I get a gude sailor,
To take my helm in hand
Till I get up to the tall top-mast,
To see if I can spy land?” —

“O here am I, a sailor gude 65
To take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall top-mast;
But I fear you ’ll ne’er spy land.”

He hadna gane a step, a step,
 A step, but barely ane, 70
 When a bout flew out of our goodly ship,
 And the salt sea it cam in.

“Gae, fetch a web o’ silken claith,
 Another o’ the twine,
 And wap them into our ship’s side, 75
 And let nae the sea come in.” —

They fetched a web o’ the silken claith,
 Another o’ the twine,
 And they wapp’d them round the gude ship’s side,
 But still the sea cam in. 80

O laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords
 To weet their cork-heel’d shoon !
 But lang or a’ the play was play’d,
 They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed 85
 That flatter’d on the faem ;
 And mony was the gude lord’s son
 That never mair cam hame.

The ladyes wrang their fingers white,
 The maidens tore their hair, 90
 A’ for the sake of their true loves ;
 For them they ’ll see nae mair.

O lang, lang, may the ladyes sit
 Wi’ their fans into their hand,
 Before they see sir Patrick Spens 95
 Come sailing to the strand !

And lang, lang, may the maidens sit,
 With their goud kaims in their hair,
 A' waiting for their ain dear loves !
 For them they 'll see nae mair.

100

O forty miles off Aberdeen
 'T is fifty fathoms deep
 And there lies gude sir Patrick Spens,
 Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

"Rise up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas," she says,
 "And put on your armour so bright ;
 Let it never be said that a daughter of thine
 Was married to a lord under night.

"Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
 And put on your armour so bright,
 And take better care of your youngest sister
 For your eldest 's awa' the last night." —

5

He 's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself on a dapple-grey,
 With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
 And lightly they rode away.

10

Lord William lookit o'er his left shoulder,
 To see what he could see,
 And there he spy'd her seven brethren bold
 Come riding o'er the lee.

15

"Light down, light down, lady Marg'ret," he said,
 "And hold my steed in your hand,
 Until that against your seven brethren bold,
 And your father, I make a stand." —

20

She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
 And never shed one tear,
 Until that she saw her seven brethren fa'
 And her father hard fighting, who loved her so dear.

"O hold your hand, Lord William!" she said, 25
 "For your strokes they are wondrous sair;
 True lovers I can get many a ane
 But a father I can never get mair." —

O, she's ta'en out her handkerchief,
 It was o' the holland sae fine; 30
 And aye she dighted her father's bloody wounds,
 That were redder than the wine.

"O chuse, O chuse, lady Marg'ret," he said,
 "O whether will ye gang or bide?" —
 "I'll gang, I'll gang, Lord William," she said, 35
 "For you have left me no other guide." —

He's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself on a dapple-grey,
 With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
 And slowly they baith rode away. 40

O they rade on, and on they rade,
 And a' by the light of the moon,
 Until they came to yon wan water,
 And there they lighted down.

They lighted down to take a drink 45
 Of the spring that ran sae clear,
 And down the stream ran his gude heart's blood,
 And sair she 'gan to fear.

“Hold up, hold up, lord William,” she says,
“For I fear that you are slain!”— 50
“’Tis naething but the shadow of my scarlet cloak,
That shines on the water sae plain.”—

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a’ by the light of the moon,
Until they came to his mother’s ha’ door, 55
And there they lighted down.

“Get up, get up, lady mother,” he says,
“Get up, and let me in!—
Get up, get up, lady mother,” he says,
“For this night my fair lady I’ve win. 60

“O mak my bed, lady mother,” he says,
“O mak it braid and deep!
And lay Lady Marg’ret close at my back,
And the sounder I will sleep.”—

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight, 65
Lady Marg’ret lang ere day—
And all true lovers that go together,
May they have mair luck than they!

Lord William was buried in St. Marie’s kirk,
Lady Marg’ret in Marie’s quire; 70
Out o’ the lady’s grave grew a bonny red rose,
And out o’ the knight’s a brier.

And they twa met, and they twa plat,
And fain they would be near;
And a’ the world might ken right weel, 75
They were twa lovers dear.

But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
 And wow but he was rough!
 For he pull'd up the bonny brier,
 And flang it in St. Marie's Loch.

80

THOMAS THE RYMER

TRUE Thomas lay o'er yond grassy bank,
 And he beheld a ladie gay,
 A ladie that was brisk and bold,
 Come riding o'er the fernie brae.

Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
 Her mantle of the velvet fine,
 At ilka tett of her horse's mane
 Hung fifty silver bells and nine.

5

True Thomas he took off his hat
 And bowed him low down till his knee:
 'All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
 For your peer on earth I never did see.'

10

'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
 'That name does not belong to me;
 I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
 And I'm come here for to visit thee.

15

'Harp and carp, Thomas,' she said,
 'Harp and carp along wi' me;
 But if ye dare to kiss my lips,
 Sure of your bodie I will be.'

20

'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
 That weird shall never daunt on me;'
 Syne he has kissed her rosy lips
 All underneath the Eildon Tree.

‘But ye maun go wi’ me now, Thomas, 25
True Thomas, ye maun go wi’ me,
For ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro’ weel or wae as may chance to be.’

She turned about her milk-white steed,
And took True Thomas up behind, 30
And aye when e’er her bridle rang,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

For forty days and forty nights
He wade thro’ red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon, 35
But heard the roaring of the sea.

O they rade on and further on,
Until they came to a garden green:
‘Light down, light down, ye ladie free,
Some of that fruit let me pull to thee.’ 40

‘O no, O no, True Thomas,’ she says,
‘That fruit maun not be touched by thee,
For a’ the plagues that are in hell
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

‘But I have a loaf here in my lap, 45
Likewise a bottle of claret wine,
And here ere we go farther on,
We’ll rest a while, and ye may dine.’

When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
‘Lay down your head upon my knee,’ 50
The lady sayd, ‘ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you ferlies three.

‘O see ye not yon narrow road,
 So thick beset wi’ thorns and briers?
 That is the path of righteousness, 55
 Tho’ after it but few enquires.

‘And see not ye that braid braid road,
 That lies across yon lillie leven?
 That is the path of wickedness,
 Tho’ some call it the road to heaven. 60

‘And see ye not that bonny road,
 Which winds about the fernie brae?
 That is the road to fair Elfland,
 Where you and I this night maun gae.

‘But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue, 65
 Whatever ye may hear or see,
 For gin ae word you should chance to speak,
 You will ne’er get back to your ain countrie.’

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
 And a pair of shoes of velvet green, 70
 And till seven years were past and gone
 True Thomas on earth was never seen.

EDMUND SPENSER

1552-1599

SPENSER, like so many other English poets, was a Londoner born and bred. He was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School and at Cambridge University. Here he studied the classics and read with enthusiasm the works of modern poets, particularly the great Italians and Chaucer. Soon after leaving the university he was recommended to the notice of Queen Elizabeth's splendid favorite, the Earl of Leicester, who took him into his service. Here he met Sir Philip Sidney, Leicester's nephew, the flower of English chivalry, and the two young men became fast friends.

Spenser's first book of verse, the *Shepherd's Calendar*, was published anonymously; but the literary world soon discovered the author, and Spenser was greeted on all sides as the new poet whose coming had been looked for since Chaucer's death. But Spenser knew better than to trust to poetry for his support, and in 1580 he accepted a position as secretary to Lord Grey, the lord deputy of Ireland. In that unhappy country, torn to pieces by Irish revolts, Spanish invasions, and English martial law, Spenser spent, with the exception of a few months in England, the remaining years of his life. He filled various offices in Ireland and at last received a grant of a large estate near Cork. Here he was visited by Sir Walter Raleigh, who found him engaged on his famous poem, *The Faerie Queene*. Raleigh was so delighted with the work that he carried the author off to the English court, where Spenser dedicated so much of it as he had finished to "the most magnificent Empress Elizabeth." He received a small pension from the queen, but was disappointed in not securing any permanent position in England.

Some time after his return to Ireland Spenser married a charming lady whom he had wooed in a series of beautiful sonnets.

For his own wedding he wrote his *Epithalamion*, the noblest marriage song in English verse. Four children were born to him, and in spite of an occasional quarrel with his Irish neighbors he was living happily at his home, Kilcolman Castle, when a fresh rebellion broke out. Spenser as the English sheriff of the county was especially obnoxious to the rebels. His castle was burned over his head, and he barely escaped with his life. He was sent to England with dispatches, but overcome by anxiety and hardship he collapsed, and died in London a month after his arrival. He was buried in Westminster Abbey near the tomb of his great predecessor, Chaucer. There is a pretty story that his hearse was followed by poets who threw into his open grave mournful elegies and the pens that wrote them. Over his tomb a marble monument was erected describing him as the Prince of Poets.

Spenser's life covers the greater part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and he represents better perhaps than any other poet the chivalric adventurous spirit of those days. Like his friends Raleigh and Sidney, he was himself a soldier and a diplomat as well as a poet: but while their names are remembered rather for their achievements in the world of deeds, Spenser's would be forgotten except for his poetry. But this will keep it alive so long as English poetry is read. He will never be again, it is true, what he was in his own day. — a popular poet: but he will always be read by those who love beautiful pictures and musical harmonies in verse. Few English poets have exerted so wide and long continued an influence as Spenser. From his own day down to that of Tennyson he has continued to be what he has well been called, "the poets' poet."

From

THE FAERIE QUEENE

CANTO I

THE RED CROSS KNIGHT AND UNA

A GENTLE Knight was pricking on the plaine,
 Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
 Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,
 The cruel markes of many a bloody felde ;
 Yet armes till that time did he never wield :
 His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
 As much disdayning to the curbe to yield :
 Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
 As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt. 9

And on his brest a bloudie crosse he bore,
 The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
 For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
 And dead as living ever him ador'd :
 Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
 For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had :
 Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
 But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad ;
 Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad. 18

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
 That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
 That greatest glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
 To winne him worship, and her grace to have,
 Which of all earthly things he most did crave ;

And ever as he rode, his hart did earne
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne ;
Upon his foe, a dragon horrible and stearne. 27

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white than snow,
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide
Under a veile, that wimpled was full low,
And over all a black stole she did throw,
As one that inly mournd : so was she sad,
And heavie sat upon her palfrey slow :
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad. 36

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore,
And by descent from royall lynage came
Of Ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from east to westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held ;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld ;
Whom to avenge, she had this knight from far compeld. 45

Behind her farre away a dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain,
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain. 54

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
 A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
 That promist ayde the tempest to withstand :
 Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride
 Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
 Not perceable with power of any starre :
 And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
 With footing worne, and leading inward farre :
 Faire harbour that them seems ; so in they entred arre. 63

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
 Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
 Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
 Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
 Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
 The sayling pine, the cedar proud and tall,
 The vine-prop elme, the poplar never dry,
 The builder oake, sole king of forrests all,
 The aspine good for staves, the cypresse funerall. 72

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
 Until the blustering storme is overblowne ;
 When weening to returne, whence they did stray,
 They cannot find that path, which first was showne,
 But wander too and fro in wayes unknowne,
 Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
 That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne :
 So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
 That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been. 81

From THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDAR

CHASE AFTER LOVE

March

Thomalin. It was upon a holiday,
When shepheardes groomes han leave to playe,
I cast to goe a shooting.
Long wandring up and downe the land,
With bowe and bolts in either hand, 5
For birds in bushes tooting,
At length within an Yvie todde,
(There shrouded was the little God)
I heard a busie bustling.
I bent my bolt against the bush, 10
Listening if any thing did rushe,
But then heard no more rustling:
Tho, peeping close into the thicke,
Might see the moving of some quicke,
Whose shape appeared not; 15
But were it faerie, feend, or snake,
My courage earnd it to awake,
And manfully thereat shotte.
With that sprong forth a naked swayne
With spotted winges, like Peacocks trayne, 20
And laughing lope to a tree;
His gylden quiver at his backe,
And silver bowe, which was but slacke,
Which lightly he bent at me:
That seeing, I levelde againe 25
And shott at him with might and maine,
As thicke as it had hayled.
So long I shott, that al was spent;
Tho pumie stones I hastily hent
And threwe; but nought availed: 30

He was so wimble and so wight,
 From bough to bough he lepped light,
 And oft the pumies latched.
 Therewith affrayd, I ranne away :
 But he, that earst seemd but to playe, 35
 A shaft in earnest snatched,
 And hit me running in the heele :
 For then I little smart did feelee,
 But soone it sore encreased ;
 And now it ranckleth more and more, 40
 And inwardly it festreth sore,
 Ne wote I how to cease it.
Willie. Thomalin, I pittie thy plight,
 Perdie with Love thou diddest fight :
 I know him by a token ; 45
 For once I heard my father say,
 How he him caught upon a day,
 (Whereof he will be wroken)
 Entangled in a fowling net,
 Which he for carrion Crowes had set 50
 That in our Peere-tree haunted :
 Tho sayd, he was a winged lad,
 But bowe and shafts as then none had,
 Els had he sore been daunted.
 But see, the Welkin thicks apace, 55
 And stouping Phebus steepes his face :
 Yts time to hast us homeward.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1564-1616

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, the greatest of all English poets, cannot be at all adequately judged by such selections as appear in this book. In fact, no book of selections can do justice to Shakespeare. The well-known and beautiful passages from his plays which appear in so many collections of verse are like jewels torn from their setting. Shakespeare's dramas are units to be read through from beginning to end, not to be broken up into bits, in order that the so-called "Beauties of Shakespeare" may be extracted from them.

In the selections in this book we give a little group of his songs, among the loveliest in any language, and four of the finest of his long series of sonnets.

Shakespeare was born in the pleasant little village of Stratford-on-Avon in the early part of Queen Elizabeth's reign. He got the regular schooling of a citizen's son at that time, but never went to either of the universities. He married in his nineteenth year, and partly to provide for his wife and children, partly it may be to escape punishment for a poaching frolic, went up to London to seek his fortune. There he fell in with a company of actors, went upon the stage himself, and began to work over and improve old plays. Soon he began to write original plays, which attracted much attention by their beautiful poetry and splendid dramatic qualities. Many of them were performed before Queen Elizabeth, and when her successor came to the throne Shakespeare's company became the King's Players. Meanwhile Shakespeare, as an actor, as a playwright, and as a shareholder in his company, was making a handsome fortune. He acquired property in London and in his native town, obtained from the Heralds' office a coat of arms, and was thereby officially recognized as a gentleman. Finally,

about 1611, he retired to spend the remainder of his life at Stratford. Here he died in 1616, probably of a fever due to the bad drainage of the little town.

Very little is known of Shakespeare's life in London. It is said that he began his career there by holding horses in front of the theater, and he is known to have been a good, though not a great, actor. In the sonnets we seem to learn that he had a young friend to whom he was tenderly attached. This friend was perhaps a nobleman at the court of Queen Elizabeth, and some writers think he was Lord Southampton, to whom Shakespeare dedicated two of his poems. This friend proved for a time untrue to Shakespeare, and his desertion was one of the greatest sorrows of the poet's life. But at last they seem to have been reconciled. The four sonnets in this collection are all addressed to this friend.

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

UNDER the greenwood tree
 Who loves to lie with me,
 And turn his merry note
 Unto the sweet bird's throat,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither : 5
 Here shall he see
 No enemy
 But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
 And love to live i' the sun, 10
 Seeking the food he eats
 And pleas'd with what he gets,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither :
 Here shall he see
 No enemy 15
 But winter and rough weather.

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,

Thou art not so unkind

As man's ingratitude;

Thy tooth is not so keen,

Because thou art not seen,

5

Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly;

Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly;

Then heigh ho, the holly!

This life is most jolly.

10

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky

That dost not bite so nigh

As benefits forgot;

Though thou the waters warp,

Thy sting is not so sharp

15

As friend remembered not.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!

FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT O' THE SUN

FEAR no more the heat o' the sun

Nor the furious winter's rages;

Thou thy worldly task hast done,

Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages:

Golden lads and girls all must,

5

As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great,

Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;

Care no more to clothe, and eat;

To thee the reed is as the oak:

10

The sceptre, learning, physic, must

All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning flash ;
 Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone ;
 Fear not slander, censure rash ; 15
 Thou hast finished joy and moan :
 All lovers young, all lovers must
 Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee !
 Nor no witchcraft charm thee ! 20
 Ghost unlaid forbear thee !
 Nothing ill come near thee !
 Quiet consummation have ;
 And renowned be thy grave !

HARK ! HARK ! THE LARK

HARK ! hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
 And Phœbus 'gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chaliced flowers that lies ;
 And winking Mary-buds begin 5
 To ope their golden eyes ;
 With everything that pretty is
 My lady sweet arise !

ARIEL'S SONGS

I

COME unto these yellow sands,
 And then take hands :
 Court'sied when you have, and kiss'd,—
 The wild waves whist,
 Foot it featly here and there ; 5

And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.

Burden. Hark! Hark!

Bough, wough.

The watch-dogs bark:

Bough, wough.

Hark, hark! I hear

The strain of strutting chanticleer

10

Cry, Cock-a-diddle-dow.

II

Full fathom five thy father lies;

Of his bones are coral made;

Those are pearls that were his eyes:

Nothing of him that doth fade,

But doth suffer a sea-change

5

Into something rich and strange.

Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:

Burden. Ding-dong.

Hark! now I hear them — Ding-dong bell.

III

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:

In a cowslip's bell I lie;

There I couch when owls do cry.

On the bat's back I do fly

After summer merrily.

5

Merrily, merrily shall I live now

Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

SONNETS

XXIX

WHEN, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone bewEEP my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
 Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
 Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least ;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state, 10
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate :
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou seest the twilight of such day 5
 As after sunset fadeth in the west,
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou seest the glowing of such fire
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
 Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
 This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best, 5
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring ; 10
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing :
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove :
O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark 5
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ; 10
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prov'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

AN ELIZABETHAN MISCELLANY

THE age of Elizabeth is famous in English literature not only for the great names of Spenser and Shakespeare, but for the number and excellence of its minor poets. England was at that time, as some one has prettily said, "a nest of singing birds." There is hardly a kind of poetry in which these writers did not do work of a very high order. The most distinctive production of the age was, of course, the drama; but of this it is impossible to give any specimens here. Next to the drama, however, the greatest achievement of these poets was in the lyric, or short song. The latter part of Elizabeth's reign saw a great outburst of music, particularly of song music. The lute, the favorite instrument of the day, was in the hands of almost every one. Songs were called for everywhere, — at court, in the theater, in the taverns, in the very barber shops, where a lute hung on the wall to beguile the leisure moments of the waiting customers. The most popular books of the day were collections of songs and sonnets. The favorite romances of the time contained numbers of charming lyrics, and the reader of Shakespeare's plays will remember how often and how delightfully the dialogue is broken by a song.

The collection here printed is meant to give some faint idea, not only of the beauty, but also of the wide range, of this lyric outburst. Between Sidney's simple ditty and the heroic ballad and the passionate sonnet of Michael Drayton, we find love songs, bridal songs, morning songs, and meditations on death, written in widely varying metrical forms, and conceived in wholly different tempers. They were not all set to music and sung; but all of them have what was the common property of the poets of that age, the singing note. Even now the verses seem to sing themselves. And it is this quality, even more than their simplicity, freshness, directness, and lovely imagery, that renders these old songs so charming to the lover of English poetry.

MY TRUE LOVE HATH MY HEART

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
 By just exchange one for another given :
 I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
 There never was a better bargain driven :
 My true love hath my heart, and I have his. 5

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
 My love in him his thoughts and senses guides :
 He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
 I cherish his because in me it bides :
 My true love hath my heart, and I have his. 10

PHILIP SIDNEY.

ROSALIND'S MADRIGAL

Love in my bosom like a bee
 Doth suck his sweet :
 Now with his wings he plays with me,
 Now with his feet.
 Within mine eyes he makes his nest, 5
 His bed amidst my tender breast ;
 My kisses are his daily feast ;
 And yet he robs me of my rest.
 Ah, wanton, will ye ?

If I sleep, then percheth he 10
 With pretty flight,
 And makes his pillow of my knee
 The livelong night.
 Strike I my lute, he tunes the string ;
 He music plays, if so I sing ; 15

He lends me every lovely thing :
 Yet cruel he my heart doth sting.
 Whist, wanton, still ye !

Else I with roses every day
 Will whip you hence, 20
 And bind you, when you long to play,
 For your offence.
 I'll shut mine eyes to keep you in,
 I'll make you fast it for your sin,
 I'll count your power not worth a pin. 25
 Alas, what hereby shall I win,
 If he gainsay me ?

What if I beat the wanton boy
 With many a rod ?
 He will repay me with annoy, 30
 Because a god.
 Then sit thou safely on my knee,
 Then let thy bower my bosom be ;
 Lurk in mine eyes, I like of thee !
 O Cupid, so thou pity me, 35
 Spare not, but play thee !

THOMAS LODGE.

IN TIME OF PESTILENCE

ADIEU ! Farewell earth's bliss !
 This world uncertain is ;
 Fond are life's lustful joys,
 Death proves them all but toys.
 - None from his darts can fly ; 5
 I am sick, I must die.
 Lord have mercy on us !

Rich men, trust not in wealth :
Gold cannot buy you health ;
Physic himself must fade ; 10
All things to end are made ;
The plague full swift goes by ;
I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on us !

Beauty is but a flower 15
Which wrinkles will devour ;
Brightness falls from the air ;
Queens have died young and fair ;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye ;
I am sick, I must die. 20
Lord have mercy on us !

Strength stoops into the grave :
Worms feed on Hector brave ;
Swords may not fight with fate ;
Earth still holds ope her gate ; 25
'Come, come,' the bells do cry ;
I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on us !

Wit with his wantonness
Tasteth death's bitterness ; 30
Hell's executioner
Hath no ears for to hear
What vain art can reply ;
I am sick, I must die.
Lord have mercy on us ! 35

Haste, therefore, each degree,
To welcome destiny !

Heaven is our heritage,
 Earth but a player's stage.
 Mount we unto the sky!
 I am sick, I must die.

40

Lord have mercy on us!

THOMAS NASH.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

COME live with me, and be my love,
 And we will all the pleasures prove
 That hills and vallies, dales and fields,
 Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
 Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
 By shallow rivers to whose falls
 Melodious birds sing madrigals.

5

And I will make thee beds of roses
 And a thousand fragrant posies,
 A cup of flowers and a kirtle
 Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

10

A gown made of the finest wool
 Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
 Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
 With buckles of the purest gold.

15

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
 With coral clasps and amber studs;
 An if these pleasures may thee move,
 Come live with me. and be my love.

20

The shepherd-swains shall dance and sing
 For thy delight each May-morning ;
 If these delights thy mind may move,
 Come live with me, and be my love.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

O SWEET CONTENT

ART thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?

O sweet content !

Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexéd ?

O punishment !

Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexéd

5

To add to golden numbers golden numbers ?

O sweet content !

Canst drink the waters of the crisped spring ?

O sweet content !

Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears ?

10

O punishment !

Then he that patiently want's burden bears,

No burden bears, but is a king, a king !

O sweet content !

Work apace, apace, apace, apace ;

15

Honest labour bears a lovely face ;

Then hey noney, noney, hey noney, noney !

THOMAS DEKKER.

STILL TO BE NEAT

STILL to be neat, still to be drest,

As you were going to a feast ;

Still to be powdered, still perfumed :

Lady, it is to be presumed,

Though art's hid causes are not found, 5
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace ;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free :
Such sweet neglect more taketh me 10
Than all the adulteries of art :
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

BEN JONSON.

TO CELIA

DRINK to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine ;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise, 5
Doth ask a drink divine :
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee, 10
As giving it a hope, that there
It could not withered be ;
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me :
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear, 15
Not of itself, but thee.

BEN JONSON.

GOOD MORROW

PACK, clouds, away, and welcome, day !
 With night we banish sorrow.
 Sweet air, blow soft ; mount, lark, aloft
 To give my love good morrow !
 Wings from the wind to please her mind, 5
 Notes from the lark I 'll borrow ;
 Bird, prune thy wing, nightingale, sing,
 To give my love good morrow !
 To give my love good morrow !
 Notes from them all I 'll borrow. 10

Wake, from thy nest, robin redbreast !
 Sing birds in every furrow,
 And from each bill, let music shrill
 Give my fair love good morrow !
 Blackbird and thrush in every bush, 15
 Stare, linnet, and cock sparrow,
 You pretty elves, amongst yourselves
 Sing my fair love good morrow !
 To give my love good morrow,
 Sing, birds, in every furrow ! 20

THOMAS HEYWOOD.

LINES ON THE TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER

MORTALITY, behold and fear !
 What a change of flesh is here !
 Think how many royal bones
 Sleep within this heap of stones ;
 Here they lie had realms and lands, 5
 Who now want strength to stir their hands ;
 Where from their pulpits seal'd with dust

They preach: 'In greatness is no trust.'
 Here's an acre sown indeed
 With the richest royall'st seed 10
 That the earth did e'er suck in,
 Since the first man died for sin!
 Here the bones of birth have cried:—
 'Though gods they were, as men they died.'
 Here are sands, ignoble things, 15
 Dropt from the ruin'd sides of kings.
 Here's a world of pomp and state,
 Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

ROSES, THEIR SHARP SPINES BEING GONE

ROSES, their sharp spines being gone,
 Not royal in their smells alone
 But in their hue;
 Maiden pinks of odour faint;
 Daisies smell-less, yet most quaint; 5
 And sweet thyme true;

 Primrose, first-born child of Ver,
 Merry Spring-time's harbinger,
 With her bells dim;
 Oxlips in their cradles growing; 10
 Marigolds on death-beds blowing;
 Lark's-heels trim:

 All dear Nature's children sweet
 Lie 'fore bride and bridegroom's feet,
 Blessing their sense! 15
 Not an angel of the air,
 Bird melodious or bird fair,
 Be absent hence!

The crow, the slanderous cuckoo, nor
The boding raven, nor chough hoar, 20
Nor chattering pie,
May on our bride-house perch or sing,
Or with them any discord bring,
But from it fly!

JOHN FLETCHER (?).

TO THE CAMBRO-BRITONS AND THEIR HARP,
HIS BALLAD OF AGINCOURT

FAIR stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main, 5
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train,
Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort, 10
Marcheth tow'rds Agincourt
In happy hour;
Skirmishing day by day,
With those that stopp'd his way,
Where the French gen'ral lay 15
With all his power.

Which in his height of pride,
King Henry did deride,
His ransom to provide
To the king sending. 20

Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile
 Their fall portending.

And turning to his men, 25
Quoth our brave Henry then,
Though they to one be ten,
 Be not amazed.

Yet have we well begun,
Battles so bravely won, 30
Have ever to the sun,
 By fame been raised.

And for myself (quoth he),
This my full rest shall be,
England ne'er mourn for me, 35
 Nor more esteem me.

Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain,
Never shall she sustain
 Loss to redeem me. 40

Poitiers and Cressy tell
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell,
 No less our skill is,
Than when our grandsire-great, 45
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
 Lopp'd the French lilies.

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vaward led, 50
With the main, Henry sped,
 Amongst his hench-men.

Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there,
O Lord, how hot they were,
On the false Frenchmen !

55

They now to fight are gone,
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,
To hear, was wonder ;
That with the cries they make,
The very earth did shake,
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
Thunder to thunder.

60

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
To our hid forces ;
When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
Stuck the French horses.

65

70

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
Piercing the weather ;
None from his fellow starts,
But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
Stuck close together.

75

80

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilbos drew,
And on the French they flew,
Not one was tardy ;

Arms were from shoulders sent, 85
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went,
Our men were hardy.

This while our noble king,
His broad sword brandishing, 90
Down the French host did ding,
As to o'erwhelm it,
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent 95
Bruised his helmet.

Gloucester, that duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood,
With his brave brother; 100
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
Scarce such another.

Warwick in blood did wade, 105
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
Still as they ran up;
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby, 110
Bore them right doughtily,
Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay 115
To England to carry;

O when shall English men,
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry?

. 120

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

SONNET LXI

SINCE there 's no help, come let us kiss and part,
Nay I have done, you get no more of me ;
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free ;
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows, 5
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies, 10
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes :
Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.

JOHN MILTON

1608-1674

JOHN MILTON, the poet of Puritanism, was born in Bread Street, London, not far from the Mermaid Tavern, where Shakespeare and his friends held their merry meetings. His father was a scrivener; that is, a sort of lawyer. He was a Puritan, but not of the severe type of the Pilgrim Fathers, for he was devoted to music and employed one of the best artists in England to paint a portrait of his little son.

Milton began his education at an early age and soon became a very hard-working student. "From the 12th year of my age," he says, "I scarcely ever went to bed before midnight." While a mere boy he learned to read not only Greek and Latin, but Hebrew, French, and Italian. He spent seven years at Cambridge, and before he left the University he won the admiration of all his fellows for his beauty and purity of life—they called him "the lady of Christ's"—as well as for his learning and genius. He wrote a number of short poems while at college, the most notable of which is the *Ode on the Morning of the Nativity*.

Milton had been destined for the church, but at Cambridge his Puritan views of church government grew so strong that he felt unable to place himself under the High Church bishops who were then supreme in England. So he returned to his father's house at Horton, a little village near Windsor, and spent the next five years in study and in writing poetry. He decided at this time to become a poet, a great poet even. "You ask what I am thinking of?" he wrote to a friend. "Of immortality—I am pluming my wings and meditating flight." During these years at Horton he wrote *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, *Lycidas*, and some shorter poems.

In 1638 he left England for a long journey on the Continent. He spent most of his time in Italy, where he exchanged verses and compliments with the poets and cultivated gentlemen of the country, until the news of the approaching civil war called him back to England. "I thought it disgraceful," he says, "while my fellow-countrymen were fighting for liberty, that I should be travelling abroad for pleasure." On his return he plunged into the political and religious contests of the time, abandoning poetry, except for a few sonnets, for twenty years. He wrote pamphlets on church reform, on education, and on the freedom of the press. He married Mary Powell in 1643, but she left him a month after the wedding, and refused to return for two years, when she suddenly appeared before him and begged his forgiveness. Milton defended the execution of Charles I and served as Latin Secretary to the Republican Council of State. After Cromwell's death he strove to uphold the Commonwealth, but the tide of public feeling was too strong for him. The Stuarts came back to the throne in 1660, and Milton was forced for a time to go into hiding. Two of his pamphlets were burned by the public hangman, and there was talk of excepting him from the general act of indemnity.

The danger soon passed, however, and for the rest of his days Milton lived the life of a retired scholar. As early as 1652 he had become totally blind, owing to the way in which from his youth up he had abused his eyes in study and composition. But his blindness did not prevent him from pursuing his favorite studies, nor from resuming the career of a poet, which he had so long abandoned. He had, it is true, much to contend with; he was not only blind, but he suffered much from gout, and his daughters proved to be anything but loving children, selling his books, combining to cheat him in the matter of marketing, and openly expressing the wish that he were dead. Yet he seems not to have been unhappy. Young friends gathered round him to take the place of his disobedient children, and there was no man in England better fitted to be company to himself than John Milton. He was accustomed to rise early, to listen to a chapter from the Hebrew Bible, to study, and to dictate to an amanuensis

through the morning. In the afternoon he walked in his garden, talked with friends, listened to music, made a supper of "olives or some light thing," and after a single pipe went to bed at nine. Often, it is said, he composed verses during the night and called on a daughter to take them down from his dictation. In this period of his life his greatest work, *Paradise Lost*, was composed, along with *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*.

Milton holds a peculiar place in English literature. He was at once the last of the Elizabethans, and the first and greatest of Puritan poets. In his character the Elizabethan love of music and poetry and beauty is united with a lofty purity, a hatred of sin, and an unshaken love of liberty such as the Elizabethans never knew. His early poems show the first of these characteristics, his later work, especially *Samson Agonistes*, the latter. *Paradise Lost*, one of the greatest poems of all time, has been fitly called the "Epic of Puritanism."

L'ALLEGRO

HENCE, loathéd Melancholy,
 Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
 In Stygian cave forlorn
 'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy !
 Find out some uncouth cell, 5
 Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
 And the night-raven sings ;
 There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
 As ragged as thy locks,
 In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell. 10
 But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
 In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
 And by men heart-easing Mirth ;
 Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
 With two sister Graces more, 15
 To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore :

Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying, 20
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee 25
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathéd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek; 30
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee 35
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unprovéd pleasures free; 40
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow, 45
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin; 50

And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill, 55
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state, 60
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe, 65
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures: 70
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied; 75
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes. 80
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two agéd oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set

Of herbs and other country messes, 85
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead. 90
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid 95
Dancing in the checkered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale, 100
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat 105
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend, 110
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus, done the tales, to bed they creep, 115
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,

Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold, 120
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear 125
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream. 130
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares, 135
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out 140
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head 145
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice. 150
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixéd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain, 5
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. 10
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view 15
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above 20
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign 25
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove. 30
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,

Sober, steadfast, and demure;
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn 35
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes: 40
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet, 45
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure; 50
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheeléd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute silence hist along, 55
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak. 60
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen 65

On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way, 70
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore, 75
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removéd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom, 80
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour, 85
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold 90
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent 95
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,

Or the tale of Troy divine, 100
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing 105
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold, 110
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride; 115
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear. 120
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud, 125
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves. 130
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archéd walks of twilight groves,

And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak, 135
Where the rude axe with heavéd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look, 140
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep, 145
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid; 150
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail 155
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowéd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light. 160
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies, 165
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age

Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The hairy gown and mossy cell,
 Where I may sit and rightlly spell 170
 Of every star that heaven doth shew,
 And every herb that sips the dew,
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures, Melancholy, give; 175
 And I with thee will choose to live.

SONNETS

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
 Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !
 My hasting days fly on with full career,
 But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth 5
 That I to manhood am arrived so near;
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
 Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
 It shall be still in strictest measure even 10
 To that same lot, however mean or high,
 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold ;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans 5
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow 10
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant: that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

THE CAVALIER POETS

THERE is no such charming group of men and poets in English literature as that which surrounds the throne of Charles I. Not one of them is great, but every one is delightful. They are all contemporaries of Milton; and just as his solemn and stately epics furnish a fitting close for the heroic age of English literature, so the light-hearted laughing songs of these poets, whom Milton, it must be confessed, heartily despised, are the last outpourings of the fountain of pure lyric verse that had flowed so freely since the days of Sidney and Spenser.

In some ways, no doubt, the Cavalier songs are inferior to the Elizabethan. They have less passion, less imagination, less frequent flashes of dazzling poetry. On the other hand, they are as a rule less wild in flight, more modern in tone and manner, more carefully polished in style. They cover a wide range of subjects; the court, the camp, the grove are their familiar themes. And they entered at times into the temple and sang there with a fervor of devotion that has rarely been equaled in English poetry. The work of such men as Herbert and Vaughan is of itself sufficient to free the whole group from the charge sometimes made against them of being only the idle singers of roses, wine cups, and light loves.

The short lyrics of this school of poets do not lend themselves easily to class-room study and critical analysis. Perhaps the best way to study these poems is simply to get them by heart. It is better to learn a song of Herrick's than the best definition of a lyric ever framed. And in no way can a perception of grace and charm and perfect art in poetry be more easily acquired than by an intimate acquaintance with the best songs of the best poets of this delightful group.

TO HIS MISTRESS THE QUEEN OF
BOHEMIA

You meaner beauties of the night,
That poorly satisfy our eyes
More by your number than your light,
You common people of the skies,
What are you when the moon shall rise? 5

You curious chanters of the wood,
That warble forth Dame Nature's lays,
Thinking your passions understood
By your weak accents, what's your praise
When Philomel her voice shall raise? 10

You violets that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known
Like the proud virgins of the year,
As if the spring were all your own,
What are you when the rose is blown? 15

So when my mistress shall be seen
In form and beauty of her mind,
By virtue first, then choice, a Queen,
Tell me if she were not designed
The eclipse and glory of her kind? 20

SIR HENRY WOTTON.

ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose:
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray 5
 The golden atoms of the day :
 For in pure love heaven did prepare
 Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
 The nightingale, when May is past : 10
 For in your sweet dividing throat
 She winters, and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars 'light,
 That downwards fall in dead of night :
 For in your eyes they sit, and there 15
 Fixéd become, as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
 The Phœnix build her spicy nest :
 For unto you at last she flies,
 And in your fragrant bosom dies. 20

THOMAS CAREW.

A BALLAD UPON A WEDDING

I TELL thee, Dick, where I have been,
 Where I the rarest things have seen ;
 O, things without compare !
 Such sights again cannot be found
 In any place on English ground, 5
 Be it at wake or fair.

At Charing-Cross, hard by the way,
 Where we (thou know'st) do sell our hay,
 There is a house with stairs ;
 And there did I see coming down 10
 Such folk as are not in our town,
 Forty at least, in pairs.

Amongst the rest, one pest'lent fine
(His beard no bigger though than thine)
Walked on before the rest : 15
Our landlord looks like nothing to him :
The King (God bless him) 't would undo him,
Should he go still so drest.

At Course-a-Park, without all doubt,
He should have first been taken out 20
By all the maids i' th' town :
Though lusty Roger there had been,
Or little George upon the Green,
Or Vincent of the Crown.

But wot you what? the youth was going 25
To make an end of all his wooing,
The parson for him stay'd :
Yet by his leave (for all his haste)
He did not so much wish all past
(Perchance), as did the maid. 30

The maid (and thereby hangs a tale),
For such a maid no Whitsun-ale
Could ever yet produce :
No grape, that 's kindly ripe, could be
So round, so plump, so soft as she, 35
Nor half so full of juice.

Her finger was so small, the ring
Would not stay on, which they did bring,
It was too wide a peck :
And to say truth (for out it must) 40
It looked like the great collar (just)
About our young colt's neck.

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out,
 As if they fear'd the light ;
But O she dances such a way !
No sun upon an Easter-day
 Is half so fine a sight. 45

Her cheeks so rare a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison,
 (Who seeks them is undone),
For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Catherine pear
 The side that 's next the sun. 50

Her lips were red, and one was thin,
Compar'd to that was next her chin
 (Some bee had stung it newly) ;
But, Dick, her eyes so guard her face :
I durst no more upon them gaze
 Than on the sun in July. 55 60

Her mouth so small, when she does speak,
Thou 'dst swear her teeth her words did break
 That they might passage get ;
But she so handled still the matter,
They came as good as ours, or better,
 And are not spent a whit. 65

Just in the nick the cook knocked thrice,
And all the waiters in a trice
 His summons did obey ;
Each serving man, with dish in hand,
Marched boldly up like our trained band,
 Presented and away. 70

When all the meat was on the table
 What man of knife or teeth was able
 To stay to be intreated ?
 And this the very reason was,
 Before the parson could say grace,
 The company was seated. 75

The business of the kitchen's great,
 For it is fit that man should eat ;
 Nor was it there denied :
 Passion o' me, how I run on !
 There's that that would be thought upon
 (I trow) besides the bride. 80

Now hats fly off, and youths carouse ;
 Healths first go round, and then the house,
 The bride's came thick and thick :
 And when it was nam'd another's health,
 Perhaps he made it hers by stealth ;
 And who could help it, Dick ? 85 90

On the sudden up they rise, and dance ;
 Then sit again, and sigh, and glance :
 Then dance again and kiss :
 Thus several ways the time did pass
 Whilst ev'ry woman wished her place,
 And every man wished his. 95

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

WHY SO PALE AND WAN, FOND LOVER ?

WHY so pale and wan, fond lover ?
 Prithee, why so pale ?
 Will, when looking well can't move her,
 Looking ill prevail ?
 Prithee, why so pale ? 5

Why so dull and mute, young sinner ?
 Prithee, why so mute ?
 Will, when speaking well can't win her,
 Saying nothing do't ?
 Prithee, why so mute ? 10
 Quit, quit, for shame, this will not move :
 This cannot take her.
 If of herself she will not love,
 Nothing can make her :
 The devil take her ! 15
SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

GOING TO THE WARS

TELL me not, sweet, I am unkind,
 That from the nunnery
 Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
 To war and arms I fly.
 True, a new mistress now I chase, 5
 The first foe in the field,
 And with a stronger faith embrace
 A sword, a horse, a shield.
 Yet this inconstancy is such
 As you, too, shall adore : 10
 I could not love thee, dear, so much,
 Loved I not honour more.
RICHARD LOVELACE.

TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON

WHEN Love with unconfined wings
 Hovers within my gates,
 And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at the grates ;

When I lie tangled in her hair,
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty. 5

When flowing cups run swiftly round
With no allaying Thames, 10
Our careless heads with roses bound,
Our hearts with loyal flames ;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep 15
Know no such liberty.

When like committed linnets I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my king ; 20
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargéd winds that curl the flood
Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make, 25
Nor iron bars a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage ;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free, 30
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty.

RICHARD LOVELACE.

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

GET up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
 Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
 See how Aurora throws her fair
 Fresh-quilted colours through the air :
 Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see 5
 The dew bespangling herb and tree.
 Each flower has wept and bow'd toward the east
 Above an hour since : yet you not dress'd ;
 Nay ! not so much as out of bed ?
 When all the birds have matins said 10
 And sung their thankful hymns, 't is sin,
 Nay, profanation to keep in,
 Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
 Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

 Rise and put on your foliage and be seen 15
 To come forth like the Spring-time, fresh and green
 And sweet as Flora. Take no care
 For jewels for your gown or hair ;
 Fear not ; the leaves will strew
 Gems in abundance upon you : 20
 Besides the childhood of the day has kept,
 Against you come, some orient pearls unwept ;
 Come and receive them while the light
 Hangs on the dew-locks of the night :
 And Titan on the eastern hill 25
 Retires himself, or else stands still
 Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying :
 Few beads are best when once we go a-maying.

Come, let us go while we are in our prime ;
And take the harmless folly of the time — 30
 We shall grow old apace and die
 Before we know our liberty.
 Our life is short, and our days run
 As far away as does the sun ;
And as a vapour or a drop of rain 35
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
 So when you or I are made
 A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
 All love, all liking, all delight,
 Lies drowned with us in endless night. 40
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna ! come, let 's go a-Maying.

ROBERT HERRICK.

TO ANTHERA

BID me to live, and I will live
 Thy Protestant to be ;
Or bid me love, and I will give
 A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind, 5
 A heart as sound and free
As in the whole world thou canst find,
 That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay
 To honour thy decree ; 10
Or bid it languish quite away,
 And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep
 While I have eyes to see;
 And, having none, yet I will keep
 A heart to weep for thee. 15

Bid me despair, and I'll despair,
 Under that cypress-tree;
 Or bid me die, and I will dare
 E'en death to die for thee. 20

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
 The very eyes of me,
 And hast command of every part
 To live and die for thee.

ROBERT HERRICK.

THE NIGHT PIECE

HER eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
 The shooting stars attend thee;
 And the elves also,
 Whose little eyes glow
 Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee! 5

No Will-o'-th'-Wisp mislight thee,
 Nor snake nor slow-worm blight thee;
 But on, on thy way,
 Not making a stay,
 Since ghost there's none to affright thee! 10

Let not the dark thee cumber:
 What though the moon does slumber?
 The stars of the night
 Will lend thee their light,
 Like tapers clear without number. 15

Then, Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me!

And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.

20

ROBERT HERRICK.

CHERRY-RIPE

CHERRY-RIPE, ripe, ripe, I cry!
Full and fair ones! Come and buy!
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer:— There,
Where my Julia's lips do smile;
There 's the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

5

ROBERT HERRICK.

UPON PREW HIS MAID

IN this little urn is laid
Prewdence Baldwin, once my maid,
From whose happy spark here let
Spring the purple violet.

ROBERT HERRICK.

THE WHITE ISLAND

IN this world, the Isle of Dreams,
While we sit by sorrow's streams,
Tears and terrors are our themes,
Reciting:

But when once from hence we fly, 5
 More and more approaching nigh
 Unto young eternity,
 Uniting

In that whiter Island, where
 Things are evermore sincere; 10
 Candour here, and lustre there,
 Delighting:—

There no monstrous fancies shall
 Out of hell an horror call,
 To create, or cause at all 15
 Affrighting.

There, in calm and cooling sleep,
 We our eyes shall never steep,
 But eternal watch shall keep,
 Attending 20

Pleasures such as shall pursue
 Me immortalized, and you;
 And fresh joys, as never too
 Have ending.

ROBERT HERRICK.

ON A GIRDLE

THAT which her slender waist confined
 Shall now my joyful temples bind:
 No monarch but would give his crown
 His arms might do what this has done.

It was my Heaven's extremest sphere, 5
 The pale which held that lovely deer:
 My joy, my grief, my hope, my love
 Did all within this circle move.

A narrow compass ! And yet there
Dwelt all that 's good, and all that 's fair ! 10
Give me but what this ribband bound,
Take all the rest the Sun goes round.

EDMUND WALLER.

VIRTUE

SWEET day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky :
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave 5
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye :
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie : 10
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives,
But though the whole world turn to coal, 15
Then chiefly lives.

GEORGE HERBERT.

THE ELIXIR

TEACH me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee :

All may of Thee partake: 5
 Nothing can be so mean,
 Which with his tincture 'for Thy sake,'
 Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine; 10
 Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
 Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
 That turneth all to gold;
 For that which God doth touch and own 15
 Cannot for less be told.

GEORGE HERBERT.

PEACE

My soul, there is a country
 Far beyond the stars,
 Where stands a wingéd sentry
 All skilful in the wars:

There above noise and danger, 5
 Sweet Peace sits crown'd with smiles,
 And One born in a manger
 Commands the beauteous files.

He is thy gracious Friend,
 And — O my Soul awake! — 10
 Did in pure love descend
 To die here for thy sake.

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of Peace,
The Rose that cannot wither, 15
Thy fortress and thy ease.

Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure. 20

HENRY VAUGHAN.

JOHN DRYDEN

1631-1700

DRYDEN was born in Northamptonshire, in the heart of England, and was graduated from Cambridge University. He was the son of Puritan parents and went to London to live while Cromwell was Lord Protector. He went over to the Royalist side, however, at the restoration of Charles II in 1660, and welcomed the king heartily in loyal verses. He remained to the end a stout upholder of the Stuart family, in its days of both good and evil repute. In 1663 he married the Lady Elizabeth Howard, the daughter of a Royalist nobleman. He was appointed collector of customs in the port of London, a position which Chaucer had once held. He was also made Poet Laureate and received other marks of royal favor.

Dryden's literary activity covered many fields. He wrote satires, plays, odes, critical essays, and made many translations from the classics. His fame to-day rests chiefly upon his satires and his odes.

Dryden perhaps had a larger personal following in London than any of the great poets who lived before him. He was the chief literary figure of his day. He held his court at Will's Coffee-house, where the wittiest men of the time sat at his feet. Pope, when a boy, was taken up to London to get a glimpse of "the great Mr. Dryden." He was buried with great ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

From

MAC FLECKNOE

SHADWELL

ALL humane things are subject to decay,
 And, when Fate summons, monarchs must obey.
 This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
 Was call'd to empire and had govern'd long,
 In prose and verse was owned without dispute 5
 Through all the realms of Nonsense absolute.
 This aged prince, now flourishing in peace
 And blest with issue of a large increase,
 Worn out with business, did at length debate
 To settle the succession of the state; 10
 And pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
 To reign and wage immortal war with wit,
 Cry'd, "'Tis resolved, for Nature pleads that he
 "Should onely rule who most resembles me.
 "Shadwell alone my perfect image bears, 15
 "Mature in dulness from his tender years;
 "Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
 "Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
 "The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
 "But Shadwell never deviates into sense. 20
 "Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
 "Strike through and make a lucid intervall;
 "But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
 "His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
 "Besides, his goodly fabrick fills the eye 25
 "And seems designed for thoughtless majesty,
 "Thoughtless as monarch oakes that shade the plain
 "And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.

“Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
 “Thou last great prophet of tautology.” 30

Here stopped the good old syre and wept for joy,
 In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
 All arguments, but most his plays, perswade
 That for anointed dulness he was made.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST; OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

A SONG IN HONOUR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY: 1697

I

'T WAS at the royal feast for Persia won
 By Philip's warlike son :
 Aloft in awful state
 The godlike hero sate
 On his imperial throne ; 5
 His valiant peers were placed around ;
 Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound :
 (So should desert in arms be crowned).
 The lovely Thais, by his side,
 Sate like a blooming Eastern bride, 10
 In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
 Happy, happy, happy pair !
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave deserves the fair. 15

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair !
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave deserves the fair.

2

Timotheus, placed on high 20
 Amid the tuneful quire,
 With flying fingers touched the lyre :
 The trembling notes ascend the sky,
 And heavenly joys inspire.
 The song began from Jove, 25
 Who left his blissful seats above,
 (Such is the power of mighty love).
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god :
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
 When he to fair Olympia pressed : 30
 And while he sought her snowy breast,
 Then round her slender waist he curled,
 And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
 The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
 A present deity, they shout around ; 35
 A present deity, the vaulted roofs rebound :
 With ravished ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod, 40
 And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravished ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god,
 Affects to nod, 45
 And seems to shake the spheres.

3

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
 Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.

The jolly god in triumph comes ;
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums ; 50
 Flushed with a purple grace
 He shows his honest face :
 Now give the hautboys breath ; he comes, he comes.
 Bacchus, ever fair and young,
 Drinking joys did first ordain ; 55
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure ;
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 60

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure ;
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure,
 Sweet is pleasure after pain. 65

4

Soothed with the sound the king grew vain ;
 Fought all his battles o'er again ;
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the
 slain.

The master saw the madness rise,
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes ; 70
 And while he heaven and earth defied,
 Changed his hand, and checked his pride.
 He chose a mournful Muse,
 Soft pity to infuse ;
 He sung Darius great and good, 75
 By too severe a fate,
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,

Fallen from his high estate,
 And weltering in his blood ;
 Deserted at his utmost need 80
 By those his former bounty fed ;
 On the bare earth exposed he lies,
 With not a friend to close his eyes.
 With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
 Revolving in his altered soul 85
 The various turns of chance below ;
 And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
 And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolving in his altered soul
 The various turns of chance below ; 90
 And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
 And tears began to flow.

5

The mighty master smiled to see
 That love was in the next degree ;
 'T was but a kindred-sound to move, 95
 For pity melts the mind to love.
 Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
 War, he sung, is toil and trouble ;
 Honour but an empty bubble ; 100
 Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying :
 If the world be worth thy winning,
 Think, O think it worth enjoying :
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee, 105
 Take the good the gods provide thee.
 The many rend the skies with loud applause ;

So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
 The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gazed on the fair 110
 Who caused his care,
 And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
 Sighed and looked, and sighed again ;
 At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
 The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast. 115

CHORUS

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gazed on the fair
 Who caused his care,
 And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
 Sighed and looked, and sighed again ; 120
 At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
 The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

6

Now strike the golden lyre again ;
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain ;
 Break his bands of sleep asunder, 125
 And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
 Hark, hark, the horrid sound
 Has raised up his head ;
 As awaked from the dead,
 And amazed, he stares around. 130
 Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
 See the Furies arise ;
 See the snakes that they rear,
 How they hiss in their hair,
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes ! 135
 Behold a ghastly band,
 Each a torch in his hand !

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
 And unburied remain
 Inglorious on the plain : 140
 Give the vengeance due
 To the valiant crew.

Behold how they toss their torches on high,
 How they point to the Persian abodes,
 And glittering temples of their hostile gods ! 145
 The princes applaud with a furious joy ;
 And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy ;
 Thais led the way,
 To light him to his prey,
 And, like another Helen, fired another Troy. 150

CHORUS

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy ;
 Thais led the way,
 To light him to his prey,
 And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

7

Thus long ago, 155
 Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
 While organs yet were mute,
 Timotheus, to his breathing flute
 And sounding lyre,
 Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire. 160
 At last divine Cecilia came,
 Inventress of the vocal frame ;
 The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
 Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
 And added length to solemn sounds, 165
 With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.

Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown :
He raised a mortal to the skies ;
She drew an angel down.

170

GRAND CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame ;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown :
He raised a mortal to the skies ;
She drew an angel down.

175

180

ALEXANDER POPE

1688-1744

POPE was the most notable literary figure of his time, just as Dryden was of the preceding age. He was born in London, the son of a prosperous linen merchant, and to his dying day he was the poet of the town rather than of the country. The talk of the coffee-houses, the chatter of the drawing-room, the buzz of court gossip, — these were the things that filled the atmosphere which Pope loved to breathe.

His poetic activity began at an early age and continued, despite lifelong ill health, until the end. He wrote epistles, pastorals, satires, and translated poems from the classics. His best known works are *The Rape of the Lock*, *The Essay on Criticism*, *The Essay on Man*, *The Dunciad*, translations of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer, and his Epistles. All these works are written in highly polished verse, and are witty, terse, and brilliant.

Pope's many weaknesses of character — his waspish temper, his vanity, his untruthfulness — may charitably be set down to his chronic ill health. His life, he said, was "one long disease." He understood only too well the gentle art of making enemies, but he also had staunch friends. His devotion to his aged mother, whom he tenderly cared for in her dotage and treated as if she were a duchess instead of the plain wife of a plain linen merchant, reveals to us the nobler side of this deformed sharp-tongued satirist.

Pope's last years were spent at Twickenham, a small village on the Thames a few miles above London. Here he built himself a handsome villa, and here his London friends came to visit him and pour into his eager ears the talk of the town. Here, until the end, he welcomed his friends and cultivated his lawns: nor did he forget to send occasional shafts at his enemies.

From

THE EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

P. Shut, shut the door, good John! fatigued I said,
 Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.
 The dog-star rages! nay, 't is past a doubt,
 All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
 Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand, 5
 They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
 What walks can guard me, or what shades can hide?
 They pierce my thickets, through my grot they glide,
 By land, by water, they renew the charge,
 They stop the chariot, and they board the barge. 10
 No place is sacred, not the church is free,
 Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me:
 Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
 Happy! to catch me, just at dinner-time.

Is there a parson much be-mus'd in beer, 15
 A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,
 A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
 Who pens a stanza, when he should engross?
 Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
 With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls? 20
 All fly to Twit'nam, and in humble strain
 Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.

Friend to my life; (which did not you prolong,
 The world had wanted many an idle song)
 What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
 Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love? 30
 A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped,
 If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
 Seiz'd and tied down to judge, how wretched I!

Who can't be silent, and who will not lie :
 To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace, 35
 And to be grave, exceeds all pow'r of face.

I sit with sad civility, I read
 With honest anguish, and an aching head ;
 And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
 This saving counsel, 'Keep your piece nine years.' 40

'Nine years' : cries he, who high in Drury-lane,
 Lull'd by soft Zephyrs through the broken pane,
 Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before 'Term ends,
 Oblig'd by hunger, and request of friends :
 'The piece, you think is incorrect? why take it, 45
 I'm all submission, what you 'd have it, make it.'

One dedicates in high heroic prose,
 And ridicules beyond a hundred foes : 110
 One from all Grubstreet will my fame defend,
 And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.
 This prints my letters, that expects a bribe,
 And others roar aloud, 'subscribe, subscribe.'

There are, who to my person pay their court : 115
 I cough like Horace, and, tho' lean, am short ;
 Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high.
 Such Ovid's nose, and 'sir ! you have an eye.' —
 Go on, obliging creatures, make me see,
 All that disgrac'd my betters, met in me. 120
 Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
 'Just so immortal Maro held his head' :
 And when I die, be sure you let me know
 Great Homer died three thousand years ago.

Why did I write? what sin to me unknown 125
 Dipt me in ink, my parents', or my own ?
 As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
 I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

I left no calling for this idle trade,
 No duty broke, no father disobey'd ; 130
 The muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not wife,
 To help me through this long disease, my life,
 To second, Arbuthnot ! thy art, and care,
 And teach the being you preserv'd to bear.

Soft were my numbers ; who could take offence
 While pure description held the place of sense ?
 Like gentle Fanny's was my flow'ry theme,
 A painted mistress, or a purling stream. 150
 Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill ;
 I wish'd the man a dinner, and sate still.
 Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret ;
 I never answer'd, I was not in debt.
 If want provok'd, or madness made them print, 155
 I wag'd no war with Bedlam or the Mint.

Peace to all such ! but were there one whose fires
 True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires ;
 Blest with each talent and each art to please, 195
 And born to write, converse, and live with ease :
 Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
 Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
 View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
 And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise ; 200
 Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
 And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer ;
 Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
 Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike ;
 Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend, 205
 A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend ;
 Dreading ev'n fools, by flatterers besieg'd,
 And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd ;

Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
 And sit attentive to his own applause ; 210
 While wits and templars ev'ry sentence raise,
 And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
 Who but must laugh, if such a man there be ?
 Who would not weep if Atticus were he ?

Oh let me live my own, and die so too !
 (To live and die is all I have to do :)
 Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
 And see what friends, and read what books I please ;
 Above a patron, tho' I condescend 265
 Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
 I was not born for courts or great affairs ;
 I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers ;
 Can sleep without a poem in my head,
 Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead. 270

Not fortune's worshipper, nor fashion's fool,
 Not lucre's madman, nor ambition's tool, 335
 Not proud, nor servile ; be one poet's praise,
 That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways :
 That flattery, ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,
 And thought a lie in verse or prose the same.
 That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long, 340
 But stoop'd to truth, and moraliz'd his song :
 That not for fame, but virtue's better end,
 He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
 The damning critic, half-approving wit,
 The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit ; 345
 Laughed at the loss of friends he never had,
 The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad ;
 The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
 The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed ;

The tale reviv'd, the lie so oft o'erthrown, 350
 Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own ;
 The morals blacken'd when the writings 'scape,
 The libell'd person, and the pictur'd shape ;
 Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
 A friend in exile, or a father dead : 355
 The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
 Perhaps yet vibrates on his sovereign's ear —
 Welcome for thee, fair virtue ! all the past :
 For thee, fair virtue ! welcome ev'n the last !

Of gentle blood (part shed in Honour's cause,
 While yet in Britain honour had applause,)
 Each parent sprung — *A.* What fortune, pray ? —

P. Their own

And better got, than Bestia's from the throne.
 Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
 Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,
 Stranger to civil and religious rage,
 The good man walk'd innoxious through his age. 395
 No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
 Nor dar'd an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
 Unlearn'd he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
 No language but the language of the heart.
 By nature honest, by experience wise, 400
 Healthy by temperance, and by exercise ;
 His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
 His death was instant, and without a groan.
 O grant me thus to live, and thus to die !
 Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I. 405

O Friend ! may each domestic bliss be thine !
 Be no unpleasing melancholy mine :
 Me, let the tender office long engage,
 To rock the cradle of reposing age,

With lenient arts extend a mother's breath, 410
 Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
 Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
 And keep awhile one parent from the sky !
 On cares like these, if length of days attend,
 May Heaven, to bless those days, preserve my friend, 415
 Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
 And just as rich as when he serv'd a Queen.
A. Whether that blessing be denied or giv'n,
 Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heav'n.

From

THE DUNCIAD

SHE comes ! she comes ! the sable throne behold
 Of Night primeval and of Chaos old !
 Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
 And all its varying rainbows die away.
 Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires, 5
 The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
 As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
 The sickening stars fade off th' ethereal plain ;
 As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,
 Closed one by one to everlasting rest ; 10
 Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
 Art after art goes out, and all is night.
 See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
 Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head !
 Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before, 15
 Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
 Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
 And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense !
 See Mystery to Mathematics fly !
 In vain ! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die. 20

Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
 And unawares Morality expires.
 Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine ;
 Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine !
 Lo ! thy dread empire, Chaos ! is restored ; 25
 Light dies before thy uncreating word :
 Thy hand, great Anarch ! lets the curtain fall ;
 And universal darkness buries all.

ODE ON SOLITUDE

HAPPY the man whose wish and care
 A few paternal acres bound,
 Content to breathe his native air
 In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread, 5
 Whose flocks supply him with attire ;
 Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
 In winter, fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
 Hours, days, and years, slide soft away 10
 In health of body, peace of mind
 Quiet by day,

Sound sleep by night ; study and ease
 Together mix'd ; sweet recreation,
 And innocence, which most does please 15
 With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown ;
 Thus unlamented let me die ;
 Steal from the world, and not a stone
 Tell where I lie. 20

THOMAS GRAY

1716-1771

GRAY, like many other men great in English letters, was born in London : but, like Spenser and Milton, both of whom were natives of London, he spent many years of his life away from the busy haunts of men : nor did he ever enter into the full activities of life, as did Milton in his prime. He even declined the position of Poet Laureate.

Gray's father was a stockbroker in London, who seems to have treated his family shabbily. Gray was sent, through the help of an uncle, to Eton, the old and famous school near Windsor Castle. Afterwards he studied at Cambridge University, where he spent nearly all the rest of his days in scholarly leisure "along the sequestered vale of life." Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare and Milton were men of affairs as well as of letters. They knew men and cities as well as books. But Gray was the scholar and poet, pure and simple. He studied much, but he wrote little. After Milton, he was the most learned of the English poets ; but, unlike Milton, his productive power was so slight that one volume is sufficient to contain all his poems. But the poetry which he has left us—consisting largely of odes and Latin poems and translations from the Norse—is so refined and lofty in feeling, and so perfect in workmanship, that it has given Gray a reputation which is wide and extremely high.

Gray's last years were clouded by ill health and low spirits. His mother, to whom he was tenderly devoted, had died. He never married, but lived a life more and more secluded as the years went by. When he died he was buried in the same tomb with his mother in Stoke Poges Churchyard, within sight of the antique towers of Eton and Windsor.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight, 5
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
 The moping owl does to the moon complain 10
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid, 15
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
 The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
 Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;
 No children run to lisp their sire's return,
 Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Of't did the harvest to their sickle yield, 25
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke ;
How jocund did they drive their team afield !
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke !

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ; 30
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour. 35
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn isle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise. 40

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of Death ?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid 45
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or wak'd to extasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes, her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ; 50
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear :
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air. 55

Some village-Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad : nor circumscrib'd alone 65
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd ;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray ;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life 75
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply :
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind ? 85

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ; 90
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tales relate ;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led, 95
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn, 105
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

“One morn I miss’d him on the custom’d hill,
 Along the heath and near his fav’rite tree ; 110
 Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
 Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he ;

“The next, with dirges due in sad array
 Slow thro’ the church-way path we saw him borne. —
 Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay 115
 Grav’d on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.”

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
 A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown :
 Fair Science frown’d not on his humble birth,
 And Melancholy mark’d him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty and his soul sincere,
 Heav’n did a recompense as largely send :
 He gave to Mis’ry all he had, a tear,
 He gained from Heaven (’t was all he wish’d) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
 Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
 (There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
 The bosom of his Father and his God.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, the son of a clergyman, was born in a small town in Ireland and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He was a desultory student both at school and at college. He frittered away his time at Dublin, and while a student of medicine at Edinburgh and Leyden he squandered recklessly all the money which his family and friends could scrape together. It is told of him that he wandered over many parts of Europe on foot, earning his daily bread, in part at least, by playing his flute from door to door. Whether this story is true or not, it is in entire keeping with his attitude towards life. He was, all his days, a sort of literary vagabond, one day writing furiously and the next spending his earnings with reckless hand.

Goldsmith found his vocation when he came to London and gave himself up to literature. He had failed as an usher in a school, as a clerk in a drug store, and as a doctor of medicine. But when he began to write, his ease and grace of expression, his wide human sympathy, and his delicious humor charmed all classes of readers. His two best known poems are *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*. His novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, would alone be sufficient to preserve his fame, while his charming rollicking comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, is still played to delighted audiences.

His success as an author introduced him into a literary coterie in London, of which Dr. Samuel Johnson was the chief. Here he made friends of Edmund Burke, David Garrick the actor, and Sir Joshua Reynolds the painter. These friends encouraged him in his literary work, loved him for his warm heart, helped him as best they could in his numerous financial difficulties, and lamented his untimely death.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN ! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease, 5
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blest the coming day, 15
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ; 20
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown 25
By holding out to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove. 30
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,

With sweet succession, taught even toil to please :
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed :
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn, 35
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green :
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way ;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies, 45
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries ;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride, 55
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more : 60
His best companions, innocence and health ;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose, 65

Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
 And every want to opulence allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
 Those calm desires that asked but little room, 70
 Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
 Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour, 75
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds
 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
 In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
 I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown, 85
 Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
 To husband out life's taper at the close,
 And keep the flame from wasting by repose :
 I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
 Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill, 90
 Around my fire an evening group to draw,
 And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
 And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue
 Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
 I still had hopes, my long vexations past, 95
 Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
 Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
 How happy he who crowns in shades like these

A youth of labour with an age of ease ; 100
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
No surly porter stands in guilty state, 105
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend ;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way ; 110
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I past with careless steps and slow, 115
The mingling notes came softened from below ;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school, 120
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ; —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail, 125
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring : 130
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,

To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;
She only left of all the harmless train, 135
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose.
The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power, 145

By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain : 150

The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay, 155

Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ; 160

Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call, 165
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries

To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise, 175
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray. 180
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest; 185
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule, 195
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face; 200
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee

At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught, 205
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declared how much he knew :
'T was certain he could write, and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge : 210
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even tho' vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew, 215
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts in-
spired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace 225
The parlour splendours of that festive place :
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door ;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ; 230
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay ;

While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row. 235

Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart. 240
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;

No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear, 245
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play, 255
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.

But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed -- 260
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey 265
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ; 270
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride 275
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth ; 280
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green :
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all, 285
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slight every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes ; 290
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress,
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed : 295
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendours rise ;
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise :
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band, 300
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed 305
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there ?
To see profusion that he must not share ; 310
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind ;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade, 315
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
Here, richly deckt, admits the gorgeous train : 320
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
Sure these denote one universal joy !

Are these thy serious thoughts ? — Ah, turn thine eyes 325
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress ;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn : 330
Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town, 335
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine, the loveliest train, —
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?

Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread ! 340

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before 345
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;

Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ; 350
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around ;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake ;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey, 355
And savage men more murderous still than they ;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.

Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green, 360
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven ! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 365
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep. 370

The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears, 375
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose, 380
And kist her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And claspt them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree, 385
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee !
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy !
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own. 390
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe ;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun, 395
And half the business of destruction done ;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;

And piety with wishes placed above, 405
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel, 415
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
Farewell, and O ! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime ;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain ;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess, 425
Tho' very poor, may still be very blest ;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away ;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

COWPER joins the age of Johnson and Goldsmith to that of Wordsworth and Byron. He was from childhood one of the shyest and most retiring of mortals. An unhappy love affair, combined with other causes, drove him to insanity, and though he recovered his reason, he was throughout his life subject to fits of deep melancholy, and even of religious madness. He found it impossible to live in the noise and bustle of London, and withdrew to a little village in the east of England, where he passed his life in the company of a few devoted friends, reading, writing, and enjoying the quiet pleasures of the country.

Cowper was a sincere lover of nature ;

God made the country, and man made the town,

he said. He was a devout Christian and was one of the first of English poets to recognize the common brotherhood of man. When the cloud of his melancholy lifted he showed himself possessed of a bright and sunny humor such as is displayed in his best known poem, *John Gilpin*. His poetry was written almost entirely between the years 1779, when, in company with the great preacher Newton, he published a volume containing many beautiful hymns, and 1791, when his translation of Homer appeared. His longer poems, *Table Talk* and *The Task*, are not much read to-day, though they contain many beautiful passages ; but some of his shorter poems are found in every collection of English verse.

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

TOLL for the brave!

The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave,
Fast by their native shore!

Eight hundred of the brave, 5
Whose courage well was tried,
Had made the vessel heel,
And laid her on her side.

A land-breeze shook the shrouds,
And she was overset; 10
Down went the Royal George,
With all her crew complete.

Toll for the brave!
Brave Kempenfelt is gone;
His last sea-fight is fought; 15
His work of glory done.

It was not in the battle;
No tempest gave the shock;
She sprang no fatal leak;
She ran upon no rock. 20

His sword was in its sheath;
His fingers held the pen,
When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men.

Weigh the vessel up, 25
Once dreaded by our foes!
And mingle with our cup
The tears that England owes.

Her timbers yet are sound,
 And she may float again 30
 Full charged with England's thunder,
 And plough the distant main.
 But Kempenfelt is gone,
 His victories are o'er;
 And he and his eight hundred 35
 Shall plough the wave no more.

BOADICEA

AN ODE

WHEN the British warrior queen,
 Bleeding from the Roman rods,
 Sought, with an indignant mien,
 Counsel of her country's gods,
 Sage beneath a spreading oak 5
 Sat the Druid, hoary chief,
 Every burning word he spoke
 Full of rage and full of grief:
 'Princess! if our aged eyes
 Weep upon thy matchless wrongs, 10
 'Tis because resentment ties
 All the terrors of our tongues.
 'Rome shall perish, — write that word
 In the blood that she has spilt;
 Perish hopeless and abhorred, 15
 Deep in ruin as in guilt.
 'Rome, for empire far renowned,
 Tramples on a thousand states;
 Soon her pride shall kiss the ground, —
 Hark! the Gaul is at her gates. 20

‘Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier’s name,
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

‘Then the progeny that springs 25
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

‘Regions Caesar never knew 30
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they.’

Such the bard’s prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords 35
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch’s pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow,
Rushed to battle, fought and died,
Dying, hurled them at the foe. 40

‘Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!’

ROBERT BURNS

1759-1796

ROBERT BURNS, the greatest of all Scottish poets, was the son of a hard-working, God-fearing, keenly intelligent Scotch peasant. He received a very irregular education, but read much and thought more about the great questions of liberty and social order that were troubling the minds of men in the years preceding the outbreak of the French Revolution. He was an eager, high-strung, passionate youth, struggling fiercely against the hardships of his lot, fond of fun, and reckless of the consequences. Finally he became involved in so much trouble that he decided to leave Scotland and go to the West Indies. To pay his passage he published by subscription a little volume of poems. It obtained an instant success, not only among his friends and neighbors, but in the literary circles of Edinburgh. The delighted poet at once renounced all thoughts of emigration and hurried to Edinburgh, "without a single acquaintance in the town or a single letter of recommendation in his pocket." He was, however, warmly received by Edinburgh society, — too warmly, perhaps, for the way in which he was petted by great ladies and toasted by the fast-living, hard-drinking gentlemen of the city seems to have turned his head completely and prevented him from doing any serious work afterwards.

A year or two later Burns returned to the country, married, and rented a farm in Ayrshire. He was, however, quite unfitted for the arduous toil and painful economy which were necessary to win even a bare living from a Scotch farm at that time, and after three years of unsuccessful experiment he gave up the effort and removed to the little town of Dumfries. Here he obtained a position in the excise, in which occupation he spent the few remaining years of his life. They were troubled and unhappy years.

Between his increasing habits of dissipation and his frankly avowed revolutionary principles Burns gradually lost the place his genius had won for him in society and sank to the companionship of the lowest classes. He wrote in this period some very lovely songs, but was apparently unable to produce any longer or more serious work. He died at the age of thirty-seven, a mere wreck of his former splendid self.

Burns was, as no poet for a century and more had been, a lover of nature. His delight in the world around him amounted almost to worship. "I never hear the loud solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon," he wrote to a friend, "or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover in an autumnal morning without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry." He was even more distinctly the poet of man. Since Shakespeare's day English literature had not seen such a living, loving, sinning, suffering, and sympathetic figure as Robert Burns. He sang of what he saw and felt in the life about him, the laughing fun, the hard toil, the genuine devotion of Scotch peasant life. Above all he is the poet of human love in all its phases, rejected, despairing, triumphant, or tenderly reminiscent.

All of Burns's best work was done in his native Scotch dialect. His English poems are little more than pale imitations. It is only in his Scotch verses that the true poet is to be found, and it is well worth our while to master the difficulties of the dialect in order to make the acquaintance of so fine and so great a poet as was this inspired Scotch peasant.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., OF AYR

*Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
 Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
 Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
 The short and simple annals of the Poor.*

GRAY.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend !

No mercenary bard his homage pays :

With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end ;

My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise :

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,

5

The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene ;

The native feelings strong, the guileless ways ;

What Aiken in a cottage would have been ;

Ah ! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sigh ;

10

The short'ning winter-day is near a close ;

The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh ;

The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose :

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,

This night his weekly moil is at an end,

15

Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,

Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,

And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,

Beneath the shelter of an agéd tree ;

20

Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher thro'

To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.

His wee bit ingle, blinkin bonnily,

His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee, 25
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin 30
A cannie errand to a neebor town :
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to shew a braw new gown,
Or déposite her sair-won penny-fee, 35
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers :
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet ;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears ; 40
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years ;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new ;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due. 45

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The youngers a' are warnéd to obey ;
An' mind their labours wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play :
" An' O ! be sure to fear the Lord alway, 50
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night !
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might :
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright ! "

But hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ; 55
 Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
 Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
 To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
 The wily mother sees the conscious flame
 Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek ; 60
 Wi' heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
 While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak ;
 Weel pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben ;
 A strappan youth : he takes the mother's eye ; 65
 Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill ta'en ;
 The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
 The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
 But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave ;
 The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy 70
 What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave ;
 Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O happy love ! where love like this is found !
 O heartfelt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !
 I've pacéd much this weary, mortal round, 75
 And sage experience bids me this declare :
 " If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
 One cordial in this melancholy vale,
 'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
 In other's arms breathe out the tender tale, 80
 Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart —
 A wretch ! a villain ! lost to love and truth !—
 That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
 Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth ? 85

Curse on his perjur'd arts ! dissembling smooth !
 Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd ?
 Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
 Points to the parents fondling o'er their child ?
 Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild? 90

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
 The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food ;
 The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
 That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood ;
 The dame brings forth in complimental mood, 95
 To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell.
 An' aft he 's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid ;
 The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
 How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face, 100
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide ;
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
 The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride :
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare ; 105
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care,
 And " Let us worship God ! " he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim : 110
 Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
 Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name :
 Or noble Elgin beets the heav'nward flame,
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays :
 Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame ; 115
 The tickl'd ears no heartfelt raptures raise ;
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high ;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage 120
With Amalek's ungracious progeny ;
Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire ;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire ; 125
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His Head ; 130
How His first followers and servants sped ;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land :
How he, who lone in Patmos banishéd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's
command. 135

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays :
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days :
There ever bask in uncreated rays, 140
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear ;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride, 145
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart !

The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
 The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ; 150
 But haply, in some cottage far apart,
 May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul ;
 And in his Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way ;
 The youngling cottagers retire to rest : 155
 The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
 And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
 That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
 And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
 Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best, 160
 For them and for their little ones provide ;
 But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
 That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad :
 Princes and lords are but the breath of kings, 165
 "An honest man 's the noblest work of God " :
 And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
 The cottage leaves the palace far behind ;
 What is a lordling's pomp ? a cumbrous load,
 Disguising oft the wretch of human kind, 170
 Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd !

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
 For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent !
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content ! 175
 And, oh, may Heaven their simple lives prevent
 From luxury's contagion, weak and vile ;
 Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
 A virtuous populace may rise the while,
 And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd Isle. 180

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
 That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
 Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
 Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
 (The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art, 185
 His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
 O never, never, Scotia's realm desert,
 But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
 In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
 That hings his head, and a' that?
 The coward-slave, we pass him by,
 We dare be poor for a' that!
 For a' that, and a' that, 5
 Our toils obscure, and a' that;
 The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
 The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hoddin-grey, and a' that; 10
 Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
 A man's a man for a' that.
 For a' that and a' that,
 Their tinsel show, and a' that;
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor, 15
 Is King o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, and stares, and a' that:
 Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof for a' that: 20

For a' that, and a' that,
 His riband, star, and a' that,
 The man of independent mind,
 He looks and laughs at a' that.

 A prince can mak a belted knight, 25
 A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
 But an honest man's aboon his might,
 Guid faith he mauna fa' that !
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their dignities, and a' that, 30
 The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
 Are higher rank than a' that.

 Then let us pray that come it may,
 As come it will for a' that ;
 That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth, 35
 May bear the gree, and a' that.
 For a' that, and a' that,
 It's coming yet, for a' that,
 That man to man, the warld o'er,
 Shall brothers be for a' that. 40

AULD LANG SYNE

I

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And never brought to mind ?
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And auld lang syne ?

II

And surely you'll be your pint-stowp, 5
 And surely I'll be mine,
 And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
 For auld lang syne.

III

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou'd the gowans fine, 10
But we've wandered monie a weary fit
Sin' auld lang syne.

IV

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn
Frae morning sun till dine,
But seas between us braid hae roar'd 15
Sin' auld lang syne.

V

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right guid-willie waught
For auld lang syne! 20

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW

I

OF a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best.
There's wild woods grow, and rivers row, 5
And monie a hill between,
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

II

I see her in the dewy flowers —
I see her sweet and fair, 10
I hear her in the tunefu' birds —
I hear her charm the air.
There's not a bonie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonie bird that sings, 15
But minds me o' my Jean.

HIGHLAND MARY

I

YE banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There summer first unfold her robes, 5
And there the longest tarry!
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary!

II

How sweetly bloomed the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom, 10
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie:
For dear to me as light and life 15
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

III

Wi' monie a vow and lock'd embrace

Our parting was fu' tender ;

And, pledging aft to meet again,

We tore oursels asunder ;

20

But O, fell Death's untimely frost,

That nipt my flower sae early !

Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay,

That wraps my Highland Mary !

IV

O, pale, pale now, those rosy lips

25

I aft hae kissed sae fondly ;

And clos'd for ay the sparkling glance

That dwalt on me sae kindly ;

And mouldering now in silent dust

The heart that lo'ed me dearly !

30

But still within my bosom's core

Shall live my Highland Mary.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

1770-1850

WORDSWORTH was born in Cumberland, in the north of England, among hills and lakes famous for their beauty. He was sent to good schools in his earlier years, and afterwards was graduated from Cambridge University. He does not seem to have been greatly influenced by his surroundings at Cambridge. He lived his life there, as he did to the end, in his own way; but he chose a way that was sane and wholesome. In his spare hours he read Chaucer and Spenser and Milton, and in his vacations went afoot over the hills which he lived among and loved to the end of his life.

Wordsworth's life was peculiarly happy. It is given to few men to have so nearly their heart's desire through a period of eighty years. He was possessed of a refined nature and of cultivated though simple tastes; a modest income supplied his actual wants and gave some margin for travel and books; he loved the peace and solitude of country life, and he found it easy to gratify these tastes. His marriage at the age of thirty-two to his cousin, Mary Hutchinson, made the joy of his fireside more complete. He desired most of all to be a poet, — a poet whose purpose was "to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous," and he succeeded. Long before he died he had become not only the head and front of what is called the Lake School of Poets, and consequently gained a very high rank among his contemporaries, but had secured for himself a name among the first half-dozen poets in English literature.

As a poet, Wordsworth's activity extended over many years and in many directions. His poetry is also very uneven. At his

worst, he is tame and insipid ; while at his best, he had " a voice whose sound was like the sea." He had simplicity, grace, and majesty, both in thought and expression. In his fervent love of nature, too, and in his communion with her in all her moods, he probably has no rival.

Wordsworth's best known poems are the *Lyrical Ballads*, *The Prelude*, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, *Ode to Duty*, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, *The Excursion*, *Laodamia*, *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, and many shorter pieces.

Among his friends were Coleridge, Scott, De Quincey, Southey, and Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby.

ODE TO DUTY

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God !
 O Duty ! if that name thou love
 Who art a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove ;
 Thou, who art victory and law 5
 When empty terrors overawe ;
 From vain temptations dost set free ;
 And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye
 Be on them ; who, in love and truth, 10
 Where no misgiving is, rely
 Upon the genial sense of youth :
 Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot
 Who do thy work, and know it not :
 Oh ! if through confidence misplaced 15
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around
 them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
 And happy will our nature be,

When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security. 20
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried ; 25
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust :
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ; 35
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same. 40

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds 45
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
 I call thee: I myself commend 50
 Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
 Oh, let my weakness have an end !
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
 The confidence of reason give ; 55
 And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

WISDOM and Spirit of the Universe !
 Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought,
 And givest to forms and images a breath
 And everlasting motion, not in vain,
 By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn 5
 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up our human soul ;
 Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things,
 With life and nature — purifying thus 10
 The elements of feeling and of thought,
 And sanctifying by such discipline
 Both pain and fear, — until we recognise
 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me 15
 With stinted kindness. In November days,
 When vapours rolling down the valleys made
 A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods

At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake, 20
Beneath the gloomy hills, I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
'T was mine among the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.
And in the frosty season, when the sun 25
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons : — happy time
It was indeed for all of us ; for me
It was a time of rapture ! — Clear and loud 30
The village clock tolled six — I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untried horse
That cares not for his home. — All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase 35
And woodland pleasures, — the resounding horn,
The pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle : with the din
Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud ; 40
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while the distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west 45
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, — or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star ; 50
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed

Upon the glassy plain : and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still 55
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round ! 60
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

THE world is too much with us : late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ; 5
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not. — Great God ! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
 Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
 A sight so touching in its majesty :
 This City now doth like a garment wear
 The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare, 5
 Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
 Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
 All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
 Never did sun more beautifully steep
 In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill ; 10
 Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
 The river glideth at his own sweet will :
 Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
 And all that mighty heart is lying still !

MILTON

MILTON ! thou should'st be living at this hour :
 England hath need of thee : she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower 5
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
 Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart :
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea : 10
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,

So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT
FROM ABBOTSFORD FOR NAPLES

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height :
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight ; 5
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners ! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes ;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue 10
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope !

THE SOLITARY REAPER

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain, 5
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
 More welcome notes to weary bands 10
 Of travellers in some shady haunt,
 Among Arabian sands :
 A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
 In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
 Breaking the silence of the seas 15
 Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?
 Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
 For old, unhappy, far-off things,
 And battles long ago : 20
 Or is it some more humble lay,
 Familiar matter of to-day ?
 Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
 That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang 25
 As if her song could have no ending ;
 I saw her singing at her work,
 And o'er the sickle bending ; —
 I listened, motionless and still ;
 And, as I mounted up the hill, 30
 The music in my heart I bore,
 Long after it was heard no more.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host, of golden daffodils ;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never ending line
Along the margin of a bay: 10
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay 15
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair; 5
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From Maytime and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay. 10

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet 15
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles. 20

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will, 25
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light. 30

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772-1834

COLERIDGE, the son of a clergyman and schoolmaster, was born in Devonshire, in the southwest of England. He was sent to Cambridge, but left before he had finished the course of study. This incident is a type of the greater part of his life—he left most things unfinished. His life was little more than a series of fragments. He and Southey planned a communistic society on the banks of the Susquehanna, far away from the crusted prejudices of England; but the plan was never carried out. He married and children were born to him; but these were, for long years, fed and housed by others. His head was full of schemes of all sorts, but very few of these plans were ever executed. “His mind,” says Southey, “is in a perpetual St. Vitus’ dance—eternal activity without action.”

This great defect—this way of leaving things unfinished—was partly due, no doubt, to the opium habit, and partly to inherited weakness of will. Much of his time was also frittered away in fruitless metaphysical speculation. In his later years he almost forsook poetry, and occupied his mind with political, critical, and religious subjects.

Coleridge’s fame as a poet rests upon *Christabel* (a fragment), *The Ancient Mariner*, and a few shorter poems. These scant remains show such brilliant imaginative power, coupled with such unusual skill in poetic expression, that all the world wishes that Coleridge had given up to poetry alone those vast powers which he scattered over so many fields.

“The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea. 25

“Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——”
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon. 30

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy. 35

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot chuse but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

“And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

“With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled. 45 50

“And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

“And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen :
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

55

“The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around :
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

60

“At length did cross an Albatross.
Thorough the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God’s name.

65

“It ate the food it ne’er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through.

70

“And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners’ hollo !

“In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine.”

75

“God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends that plague thee thus !—
Why look’st thou so ? ” — “ With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.”

80

PART II

“The Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea. 85

“And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners’ hollo ! 90

“And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work ’em woe :
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
‘ Ah wretch ! ’ said they, ‘ the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow ! ’ 95

“Nor dim nor red, like God’s own head
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist. 100
‘ ’T was right,’ said they, ‘ such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.’

“The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea. 105

“Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
’T was sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea ! 110

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean. 115

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink :
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. 120

"The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea. 125

"About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white. 130

"And some in dreams assuréd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so ;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

"And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot. 135

“Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
* About my neck was hung.” 140

PART III

“There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When, looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky. 145

“At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist. 150

“A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered. 155

“With throats unslacked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail! 160

“With throats unslacked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all. 165

“ See ! see ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal ;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !

170

“ The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun ;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

175

“ And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven’s Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

180

“ Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres ?

“ Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a Death ? and are there two ?
Is Death that woman’s mate ?

185

“ Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold :
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she
Who thicks man’s blood with cold.

190

“The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
‘The game is done! I’ve won, I’ve won!’
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

195

“The Sun’s rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper o’er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

200

“We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman’s face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

205

210

“One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

215

“Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan,)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

“The souls did from their bodies fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!”

220

PART IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner !
I fear thy skinny hand ! 225
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown." —
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest ! 230
This body dropt not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony. 235

"The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

"I looked upon the rotting sea, 240
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht, 245
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat ;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky, 250
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

“The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.” 255

“An orphan’s curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man’s eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

“The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

"Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
 Like April hoar-frost spread ;
 But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
 The charmed water burnt alway
 A still and awful red.

“Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

“Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam ; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

“O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware: 285
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

“The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
Like lead into the sea.”

PART V

“Oh Sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven, 295
That slid into my soul.

“The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

“My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

“I moved, and could not feel my limbs: 305
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

“And soon I heard a roaring wind ;
It did not come anear ;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere. 310

“The upper air burst into life !
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about !
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between. 315

“And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud,
The Moon was at its edge. 320

“The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side : —
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide. 325

“The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on !
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan. 330

“They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

“The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze up blew ;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,

Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew. 340

“The body of my brother’s son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.”

“I fear thee, ancient Mariner !” 345
“Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

“For when it dawned — they dropped their arms, 350
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

“Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ; 355
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

“Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

“And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel’s song, 365
That makes the heavens be mute.

“It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June, 370
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

“Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe :
Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375
Moved onward from beneath.

“Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go. 380
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

“The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean :
But in a minute she ’gan stir, 385
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

“Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound : 390
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

“How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare ;
But ere my living life returned, 395
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

“ ‘Is it he?’ quoth one, ‘Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross. 400

“ ‘The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.’ 405

“The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew;
Quoth he, ‘The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.’ ”

PART VI

First Voice

“ ‘But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?’ 410

Second Voice

“ ‘Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast— 415

“ ‘If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.’ 420

First Voice

“ ‘But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?’ ”

Second Voice

“ ‘The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind. 425

“ ‘Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner’s trance is abated.’

“ I woke, and we were sailing on 430
As in a gentle weather :
’T was night, calm night, the Moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

“ All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter : 435
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

“ The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away :
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440
Nor turn them up to pray.

“ And now this spell was snapt : once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen — 445

“ Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450
Doth close behind him tread.

“But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade. 455

“It raised my hair, it fann’d my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

“Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly too :
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

“Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed 465
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

“We drifted o’er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God ! 470
Or let me sleep alway.

“The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon. 475

“The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

“ And the bay was white with silent light, 480
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

“ A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were: 485
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

“ Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
On every corse there stood.

“ This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ; 495

“ This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart —
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

“ But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot’s cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

“ The Pilot and the Pilot’s boy,
I heard them coming fast : 505
Dear Lord in heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

“I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood. 510
He ’ll shrieve my soul, he ’ll wash away
The Albatross’s blood.”

PART VII

“This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea. 515
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

“He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump: 520
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak stump.

“The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
‘Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair, 525
That signal made but now?’

“‘Strange, by my faith!’ the Hermit said —
‘And they answered not our cheer.
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere! 530
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

“‘Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf’s young.’

“ ‘Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)

I am a-fear'd.’ — ‘Push on, push on !’ 540

Said the Hermit cheerily.

“The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;

The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard. 545

“Under the water it rumbled on,

Still louder and more dread :

It reached the ship, it split the bay :

The ship went down like lead.

“Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550

Which sky and ocean smote,

Like one that hath been seven days drowned

My body lay afloat ;

But, swift as dreams, myself I found

Within the Pilot’s boat. 555

“Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,

The boat spun round and round ;

And all was still, save that the hill

Was telling of the sound.

“I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked 560

And fell down in a fit ;

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,

And prayed where he did sit.

“I took the oars : the Pilot’s boy,

Who now doth crazy go, 565

Laughed loud and long, and all the while

His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow. 575
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale; 580
And then it left me free.

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns. 585

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach. 590

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell, 595
Which biddeth me to prayer.

“O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea :
So lonely ’t was, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

600

“O sweeter than the marriage feast,
’Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company ! —

“To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

605

“Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest ! —
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

610

“He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

615

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone ; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the Bridegroom’s door.

620

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

625

WALTER SCOTT

1771-1832

SCOTT is as distinctly the type of the Scottish gentleman as Burns is of the Scottish peasant. Descended on both sides from old families of the Scottish border, he divided his childhood between his own romantic town of Edinburgh and a country district where every river, field, and hill had its song or story.

He was from early youth a voracious reader, particularly in the fields of mediæval history and old tradition. He was one of the first of English poets to come under the influence of the romantic literature of Germany, and his earliest attempts in verse were translations or imitations of German poetry. In 1802 he published a collection of old ballads, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, many of which he had himself taken down from the lips of the few old men or women of the Border country who still remembered these swiftly perishing treasures of past ages. His first long poem, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, is founded upon these ballads and creates anew the old world of the Borders, with its gentle ladies and hard-riding moss troopers, its fierce passions and gloomy superstitions. In his next work, *Marmion*, Scott tried his hand on a graver theme, one of the old wars between England and Scotland, and the crushing defeat of the latter country at Flodden. In the great battle piece with which the poem closes we find Scott at his very best. *The Lady of the Lake*, which appeared two years after *Marmion*, opened to English readers the hitherto unknown world of the Scotch Highlands. It proved the most successful, as it is certainly the most finished and charming, of his metrical romances.

Scott's later poems, *Rokeby*, *The Lord of the Isles*, and others, show traces of decline. He seems to have worked out the vein of the metrical romance and was already turning to new fields.

Waverley, the first of his great prose stories, appeared in the summer of 1814, and from that time till just before his death Scott poured out a succession of novels and romances, which have given him even greater fame than his poems.

In 1826 the failure of the publishing house in which Scott was a silent partner left him confronted with an enormous debt of over half a million dollars. With a true gentleman's horror of failing to pay his debts he declined to go into bankruptcy and set himself resolutely to pay off the vast sum with his pen. The last years of his life were given over to this task. He did much; but, old and wearied as he was, his strength failed him before the whole was accomplished, and he broke down utterly. After a vain attempt to regain his health by foreign travel, he returned to die in Scotland. He was buried in the ruined Abbey of Dryburgh, within sound of his favorite stream, the Tweed,—a fit resting place for such a lover of the wild scenery and old romance of his native land.

As an artist in verse Scott was inferior to most of his contemporaries, but he was the best story-teller in English poetry since Dryden, and he had a gift of song unknown to Dryden or to Dryden's successors in the eighteenth century. It is quite impossible to do Scott justice in selections; to know him at his best we must read his longer poems. But the songs and ballads here printed give at least some idea of his chief characteristics,—his old-world loyalty, his love of romance, and his charming lyric note.

From

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

BREATHES THERE A MAN WITH SOUL SO DEAD

I

BREATHES there a man, with soul so dead,
 Who never to himself hath said,
 This is my own, my native land!
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
 As home his footsteps he hath turned, 5
 From wandering on a foreign strand!
 If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
 For him no minstrel raptures swell;
 High though his titles, proud his name,
 Boundless his wealth as wish can claim; 10
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
 The wretch, concentrated all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung, 15
 Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
 Meet nurse for a poetic child!
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
 Land of the mountain and the flood, 20
 Land of my sires! what mortal hand
 Can e'er untie the filial band
 That knits me to thy rugged strand!
 Still, as I view each well-known scene,
 Think what is now, and what hath been, 25
 Seems as, to me, of all bereft,

Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still;
Even in extremity of ill.

By Yarrow's streams still let me stray, 30
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone, 35
The Bard may draw his parting groan.

A WEARY LOT IS THINE, FAIR MAID

"A WEARY lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!

To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!

A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien, 5
A feather of the blue,

A doublet of the Lincoln green—
No more of me you knew,
My love!

No more of me you knew. 10

"This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter' snow,
Ere we two meet again."

He turn'd his charger as he spake, 15
Upon the river shore;

He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, "Adieu forever more,
My love!

And adieu forever more." 20

HUNTING SONG

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day;
All the jolly chase is here
With hawk and horse and hunting-spear;
Hounds are in their couples yelling, 5
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily mingle they,
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain gray, 10
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming,
And foresters have busy been
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay, 15
'Waken, lords and ladies gay.'

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the greenwood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size; 20
We can show the marks he made
When 'gainst oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay;
Waken, lords and ladies gay.

Louder, louder chant the lay, 25
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we;

Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
Stanch as hound and fleet as hawk; 30
Think of this and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay!

ROSABELLE

O LISTEN, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

‘Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew, 5
And, gentle lady, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

‘The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly; 10
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

‘Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round lady gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch; 15
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?’

‘Tis not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my lady-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall. 20

‘Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide
If ’t is not filled by Rosabelle.’

O'er Roslin all that dreary night 25
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen; 30
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud, 35
Sheath'd in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail. 40

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold 45
Lie buried within that proud chapelle:
Each one the holy vault doth hold,
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each Saint Clair was buried there
With candle, with book, and with knell; 50
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

THE CAVALIER

WHILE the dawn on the mountain was misty and gray,
My true love has mounted his steed and away,
Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and o'er down ;
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the
Crown !

He has doff'd the silk doublet the breast-plate to bear, 5
He has placed the steel-cap o'er his long flowing hair,
From his belt to his stirrup his broadsword hangs
down —
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the
Crown !

For the rights of fair England that broadsword he draws ;
Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause ; 10
His watchword is honour, his pay is renown,—
God strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown !

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all
The round-headed rebels of Westminster Hall ;
But tell those bold traitors of London's proud town 15
That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes ;
There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose !
Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and
Brown,
With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown ? 20

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier !
Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless his spear,
Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown,
In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

1777-1844

THOMAS CAMPBELL, a Scotch poet belonging to the literary circle of Sir Walter Scott, became famous at the age of twenty-one by his didactic poem, *The Pleasures of Hope*. He wrote several other long poems, — one of them, *Gertrude of Wyoming*, on the massacre which took place at the Pennsylvania village of that name during the Revolutionary War. He is best known, however, as the author of three of the most stirring war-songs in the English language. *Hohenlinden* is found in nearly every reader or book of declamations ; the other two, here printed, are perhaps even finer.

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

YE Mariners of England,
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze,
Your glorious standard launch again 5
To match another foe,
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow !
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 10

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave,
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave.

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell 15
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 20

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep:
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak 25
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow!
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow. 30

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart,
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean warriors, 35
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow!
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow. 40

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

OF Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown,
And her arms along the deep proudly shone; 5
By each gun the lighted brand
In a bold determined hand,
And the Prince of all the land
Led them on.

Like leviathans afloat 10
Lay their bulwarks on the brine,
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line:
It was ten of April morn by the chime:
As they drifted on their path, 15
There was silence deep as death,
And the boldest held his breath,
For a time.

But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene, 20
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between—
'Hearts of oak,' our captains cried, when each gun
From its adamant lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships, 25
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane 30

To our cheering sent us back; —
Their shots along the deep slowly boom: —
Then ceased — and all is wail,
As they strike the shattered sail,
Or in conflagration pale 35
Light the gloom.

Out spoke the victor then,
As he hailed them o'er the wave;
'Ye are brothers! ye are men!
And we conquer but to save; 40
So peace instead of death let us bring:
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet
With the crews at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King.' 45

Then Denmark blest our chief,
That he gave her wounds repose;
And the sounds of joy and grief,
From her people wildly rose,
As death withdrew his shades from the day; 50
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woeful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

Now joy, old England, raise 55
For the tidings of thy might,
By the festal cities' blaze,
While the wine cup shines in light;
And yet amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep, 60
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!

Brave hearts ! to Britain's pride
Once so faithful and so true, 65
On the deck of fame that died, —
With the gallant good Riou,
Soft sigh the winds of heaven o'er their grave !
While the billow mournful rolls,
And the mermaid's song condole, 70
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave !

LORD BYRON

1788-1824

GEORGE GORDON NOEL BYRON, the descendant of a noble family dating from the Norman Conquest, was born in London, Jan. 22, 1788. His father was a reckless libertine, his mother a passionate and foolish heiress. Her fortune was soon squandered by her husband, who then left her to bring up their son in poverty. At the age of ten the boy inherited from a grand-uncle the title of Lord Byron and the estate of Newstead Abbey.

At seventeen years of age Byron entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he distinguished himself by his fondness for athletics, swimming, riding, fencing, and boxing. He cared little for his studies, though he read very widely. His first volume of poems, *Hours of Idleness*, was published while he was still an undergraduate. It was harshly criticised by the *Edinburgh Review*, and Byron answered the attack in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, a poem which first displayed his genius for satire. Shortly afterwards, in 1809, he left England on a long tour through the south and east of Europe. He visited Portugal, Spain, Sardinia, Sicily, and Malta, traveled through the savage highlands of Albania to Athens, and sailed through the *Aegean* to Constantinople.

In 1811 he returned to England, bringing with him the materials for the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, which appeared in the following year. This poem made him famous. During the next few years he wrote a number of romantic poems, the scenes of which are laid in Greece or Turkey. Such are *The Giaour*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, and *The Siege of Corinth*. In 1815 he married Miss Milbank, but a year later, shortly after the birth of their daughter, she deserted him. The cause of her action has never been known; she pretended that her life had been in danger from

his violence and hinted that some horrible crime separated them forever. Such an outcry arose that Byron felt obliged to leave England, and early in 1816 he took final leave of his country.

The first years of his voluntary exile were spent in wild dissipation, but he was finally rescued from his licentious life by an attachment for a beautiful Venetian lady, and through her influence enrolled himself among the Italians who were endeavoring to shake off the Austrian yoke.

In 1823 he joined the Greeks in their struggle for independence and looked forward to playing the part of liberator of the country he loved; but he was attacked by fever and died at Missolonghi on the 19th of April, 1824.

Byron's character was a curious mixture of base and noble elements. He was proud, self-willed, and overbearing. At the same time he was generous, brave, and loving. He abandoned himself more than once to degrading passions, but was strong enough to shake them off, and we must not forget that he left a life of ease in Italy to die for the cause of freedom. In his work, as in his character, good and bad are strangely mingled. He wrote hastily and carelessly, and seldom revised his poems, and as a consequence they are full of faults. On the other hand, he is, at his best, one of the strongest, sincerest, and most impressive of English poets.

SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind !

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,

For there thy habitation is the heart —

The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,

Their country conquers with their martyrdom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,

And thy sad floor an altar — for 't was trod,

5

10

Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears :
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil, 5
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred — forbidden fare ; 10
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death ;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake ;
And for the same his lineal race 15
In darkness found a dwelling place ;
We were seven — who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage ; 20
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied ;
Three were in a dungeon cast, 25
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mold,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray, 30
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp: 35
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away, 40
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score, 45
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together — yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart, 55
'T was still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,

To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old, 60
Or song heroically bold ;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound, not full and free, 65
 As they of yore were wont to be :
 It might be fancy, but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
 I ought to do — and did my best —
And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven — 75
 For him my soul was sorely moved ;
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest ;
For he was beautiful as day —
 (When day was beautiful to me 80
 As to young eagles, being free) —
 A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun : 85
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for naught but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,

Unless he could assuage the woe 90
Which he abhorred to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind ;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood, 95
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy : — but not in chains to pine :
His spirit withered with their clank,
I saw it silently decline —
And so perchance in sooth did mine : 100
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf ;
To him his dungeon was a gulf, 105
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls :
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow ;
Thus much the fathom line was sent 110
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave intrhalls :
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake 115
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day ;
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked ;
And I have felt the winter's spray

Wash through the bars when winds were high 120
And wanton in the happy sky ;
 And then the very rock hath rocked,
 And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free. 125

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food ;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare, 130
And for the like had little care :
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moistened many a thousand years, 135
Since man first pent his fellow-men
Like brutes within an iron den ;
But what were these to us or him ?
These wasted not his heart or limb ;
My brother's soul was of that mold 140
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side ;
But why delay the truth ? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head, 145
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead, —
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died, and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave 150
Even from the cold earth of our cave.

I begged them as a boon to lay
 His corse in dust whereon the day
 Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
 But then within my brain it wrought, 155
 That even in death his freeborn breast
 In such a dungeon could not rest.
 I might have spared my idle prayer —
 They coldly laughed, and laid him there :
 The flat and turfless earth above 160
 The being we so much did love ;
 His empty chain above it leant,
 Such murder's fitting monument !

VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,
 Most cherished since his natal hour, 165
 His mother's image in fair face,
 The infant love of all his race,
 His martyred father's dearest thought,
 My latest care, for whom I sought
 To hoard my life, that his might be 170
 Less wretched now, and one day free ;
 He, too, who yet had held untired
 A spirit natural or inspired —
 He, too, was struck, and day by day
 Was withered on the stalk away. 175
 Oh, God ! it is a fearful thing
 To see the human soul take wing
 In any shape, in any mood :
 I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
 I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180
 Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
 I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
 Of Sin delirious with its dread ;

But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmixed with such — but sure and slow : 185
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender, kind,
And grieved for those he left behind ;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray ;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright, 195
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost 200
In this last loss, of all the most ;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less :
I listened, but I could not hear ; 205
I called, for I was wild with fear ;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishéd ;
I called, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
And rushed to him : — I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, I only drew
The accurséd breath of dungeon dew ;
The last, the sole, the dearest link 215
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,

Was broken in this fatal place.
 One on the earth, and one beneath —
 My brothers — both had ceased to breathe : 220
 I took that hand which lay so still,
 Alas ! my own was full as chill ;
 I had not strength to stir, or strive,
 But felt that I was still alive —
 A frantic feeling, when we know 225
 That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
 I had no earthly hope but faith,
 And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well — I never knew —
 First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too :
 I had no thought, no feeling — none — 235
 Among the stones I stood a stone,
 And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
 As shrubless crags within the mist ;
 For all was blank, and bleak, and gray ;
 It was not night, it was not day ; 240
 It was not even the dungeon light,
 So hateful to my heavy sight,
 But vacancy absorbing space,
 And fixedness without a place ;
 There were no stars, no earth, no time, 245
 No check, no change, no good, no crime,
 But silence, and a stirless breath
 Which neither was of life nor death ;
 A sea of stagnant idleness,
 Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless ! 250

X

A light broke in upon my brain, —
It was the carol of a bird ;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes 255
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery ;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track ; 260
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came 265
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree ;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me ! 270
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more :
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when 275
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird ! I could not wish for thine !
Or if it were, in wingéd guise,

A visitant from Paradise ;
 For — Heaven forgive that thought ! the while 285
 Which made me both to weep and smile —
 I sometimes deemed that it might be
 My brother's soul come down to me ;
 But then at last away it flew,
 And then 't was mortal well I knew, 290
 For he would never thus have flown,
 And left me twice so doubly lone,
 Lone as the corse within its shroud,
 Lone as a solitary cloud, —
 A single cloud on a sunny day, 295
 While all the rest of heaven is clear,
 A frown upon the atmosphere,
 That hath no business to appear
 When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate, 300
 My keepers grew compassionate ;
 I know not what had made them so,
 They were inured to sights of woe,
 But so it was : — my broken chain
 With links unfastened did remain, 305
 And it was liberty to stride
 Along my cell from side to side,
 And up and down, and then athwart,
 And tread it over every part ;
 And round the pillars one by one, 310
 Returning where my walk begun,
 Avoiding only, as I trod,
 My brothers' graves without a sod ;
 For if I thought with heedless tread
 My step profaned their lowly bed, 315

My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all 320
Who loved me in a human shape ;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me :
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery ; 325
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad ;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them, and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame ;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below, 335
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channeled rock and broken bush ;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down : 340
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view ;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor, 345

But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
 Of gentle breath and hue. 350
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all ;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly ; 355
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled — and would fain
I had not left my recent chain ;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load ;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
Had almost need of such a rest. 365

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
 I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote ;
At last men came to set me free ; 370
 I asked not why, and recked not where ;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
 I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last, 375
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown

A hermitage — and all my own !
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home : 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they ?
We were all inmates of one place, 385
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell !
In quiet we had learned to dwell ;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends 390
To make us what we are : — even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

SHE walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies ;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes :
Thus mellow'd to that tender light 5
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face ; 10
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,

The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-
SIXTH YEAR

MISSOLOGHI, JANUARY 22, 1824

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move :
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love !

My days are in the yellow leaf ;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone ;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone !

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 't is not *thus* — and 't is not *here* —
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see !
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake ! (not Greece — she *is* awake !) 25
Awake, my spirit ! Think through *whom*
Thy lifeblood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home !

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood ! — unto thee 30
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, *why live ?*
The land of honorable death
Is here : — up to the field, and give 35
Away thy breath !

Seek out — less often sought than found —
A soldier's grave, for thee the best ;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest. 40

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

1792-1822

SHELLEY was born in Sussex, in the south of England. His father, Sir Timothy Shelley, was a well-to-do country gentleman, who sent his son to Eton and then to Oxford. The lad was high-spirited and rather ungovernable, and chafed at all restraint. He was expelled from Oxford when he was nineteen.

Shortly afterwards Shelley married Harriet Westbrook, a schoolgirl of sixteen. This childish pair lived an unsettled life for a few years and then parted. After the suicide of his wife, Shelley married Mary Godwin, with whom he lived happily until his death. Deprived by the Lord Chancellor of the guardianship of his children by his first wife, and stung by the harsh criticisms which were heard on every hand, he forsook England and spent the remainder of his life in Italy. It was during his residence here that his chief literary work was done. At the age of twenty-nine he was drowned in a squall off the coast of Italy. His remains were laid to rest in the Protestant cemetery at Rome.

Shelley's chief poems are *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Cenci*, *Adonais*, a noble elegy on Keats, *To a Skylark*, *Ode to the West Wind*, and many short lyrics.

Much of Shelley's poetry expresses the political, social, and religious unrest of his times ; and, as Matthew Arnold points out, he failed to get any "wide and luminous view of life." But Shelley died at thirty, and it is not given to many mortals to obtain a "wide and luminous view of life" at that age. Let us be glad, therefore, that he has left us a body of poetry that will always charm us by its brilliant imaginative qualities, its refinement and delicacy, its gifts of language and of melody, and its fine lyric note.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O, WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou, 5
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill 10
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
 With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion, 15
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher, 25
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baia's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers 35
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed 50
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55
 One too like thee : tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
 What if my leaves are falling like its own !
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
 My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
 And, by the incantation of this verse, 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
 Ashes and sparks. my words among mankind !
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ? 70

TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit !

Bird thou never wert,

That from heaven, or near it,

Pourest thy full heart

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire ;

The blue deep thou wingest,

And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run ;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. 15

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight ;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, — but yet I hear thy shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, — we feel that it is there. 25

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not ;
What is most like thee ?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody. 35

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not: 40

- Like a high-born maiden
In a palace-tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower : 45
- Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its ærial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from
the view : 50
- Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingéd
thieves : 55
- Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers, —
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, — thy music doth surpass. 60
- Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. 65
- Chorus Hymeneal,
Or triumphal chaunt
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt —
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain ?
What fields, or waves, or mountains ?
What shapes of sky or plain ?
What love of thine own kind ? what ignorance of pain ? 75

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be :
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee :
Thou lovest, but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream ? 85

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not :
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught ;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear,
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near. 95

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground ! 100

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now. 105

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright,
I arise from dreams of thee, 5
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me — who knows how?
To thy chamber-window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream — 10
The champak-odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine, 15
Belovéd as thou art!

Oh lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale. 20
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast:
Oh press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last!

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

THE fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix forever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single; 5
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See, the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another; 10
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;—
What are all these kissings worth, 15
If thou kiss not me?

JOHN KEATS

1795-1821

KEATS was born of humble parentage in London. After a few years' schooling he was apprenticed to a surgeon. He worked for a while in the hospitals of London, but his sensitive nature recoiled from such scenes. Moreover, his poetic faculties were awakened by Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, which has quickened the imagination and fired the ambition of so many poets. He now set to work in earnest to write verse. His education had been scant, but he supplemented it by wide reading, especially in translations of the Greek and Roman classics. His first long poem, *Endymion*, was harshly criticised by the reviewers; but he again worked with greater determination. When *Hyperion* appeared it was recognized that a new poet of brilliant powers had arisen. These two works, together with the shorter poems, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode to a Nightingale*, and the sonnet *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, gave promise of far greater things. But this promise was not fulfilled. Keats died of consumption at Rome in the twenty-sixth year of his age.

Keats's poetry shows a profound love of beauty in all its forms, an imagination of very high order, a gift for melodious expression, and an intense love for everything that appeals to the senses. He loved "shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound." On the other hand, the political, social, and religious controversies of the day, with all their clash of opinion, seem to have passed over his head. If he heard them, he did not heed. His whole soul was filled with the old Greek love of beauty for beauty's sake. His range therefore is, according to modern standards, somewhat narrow, but within this range he has a place that is high and secure.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, 5
 But being too happy in thy happiness, —
 That thou, light-wingéd Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease. 10

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvéd earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth !
 O for a beaker full of the warm South, 15
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stainéd mouth ;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim : 20

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs, 25
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs ;
 Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 30

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
 Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways. 40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalm'd darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a muséd rime,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades 75
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side ; and now 't is buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music : — do I wake or sleep ? 80

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen :
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told 5
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne :
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead :
 When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
 And hiding in cooling trees, a voice will run
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;
 That is the Grasshopper's — he takes the lead
 In summer luxury, — he has never done
 With his delights ; for when tired out with fun
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant wood.
 The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
 On a lone winter evening, when the frost
 Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
 The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
 And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
 The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

ALFRED TENNYSON

1809-1892

TENNYSON was born in Lincolnshire, in the eastern part of England. He was the son of a clergyman. After receiving his early training from his father he went to Cambridge University. While there he received the Chancellor's Prize for the best English poem. His first volume of poems, too, was published while he was still an undergraduate, and the poetic activity which began so early continued to the end of a long life.

Tennyson's life presents, in many respects, a striking parallel to that of Wordsworth. Each took himself very seriously from the start; each devoted his whole soul to poetry and wrote voluminously; each was appointed Poet Laureate; each won his way to fame slowly but surely, and each lived to see himself regarded at the end of a long life as the foremost poet of his generation.

Among the best known of Tennyson's poems are *Ænone*, *A Dream of Fair Women*, *The Lotus Eaters*, *Ulysses*, *Locksley Hall*, *The Revenge*, *The Princess*, *Maud*, *In Memoriam*, *Enoch Arden*, *The Idylls of the King*, and many short songs.

Tennyson was, by almost common consent, the chief poet of the Victorian era. He seemed to gather up in himself nearly all the poetic excellences which the other poets of his time, and of the preceding age, showed individually. He had Wordsworth's dignity and grace, while his imagination was more brilliant; he had Keats's love of beauty, as well as his gifts of language and of melody; and he also fell heir to Shelley's lyric note. In epic power he was beyond any of these, and he surpasses in moral force all except Wordsworth. In the drama, however, he was not successful. Even his best plays, *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, and *Becket*, do not add

to his fame. But his age was not a dramatic age, and few poets are great enough to rise above their surroundings.

In tender sentiment, however, in lyric grace, in epic power, in charm of imagery, in the witchery of melody, and in the mastery of language, Tennyson is the fittest representative of the many-sided Victorian age.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep, 5
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land : 10
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights 15
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls 20
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more ; but let what will be, be.

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm 25
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, 30
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known: 35
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest: and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus, 40
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept, 45
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock, 50
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt; 55

For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind, 60
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King. 65

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds, 70
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight: 75
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing 80
I bad thee: watch, and lightly bring me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought ;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt, 85

How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

‘And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth, 90
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand 95
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept, 100
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, “King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps 105
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.”
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost.’

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit, 110
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
‘What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?’

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere: 115
‘I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.’

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :
‘ Ah miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted ! Woe is me ! 120
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow’d of the power in his eye
That bow’d the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights
In whom should meet the offices of all, 125
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt ;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasures of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence : 130
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.’

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch’d the sword, 135
And strongly wheel’d and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl’d in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock 140
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash’d and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish’d him 145
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
‘ Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard or seen ? ’ 150

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
‘Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho’ I live three lives of mortal men, 155
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish’d him 160
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.’

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
‘My end draws nigh ; ’t is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear 165
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.’

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere 170
Remorsefully regarded thro’ his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words ;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O’er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro’ the place of tombs. 175

But, as he walk’d, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh’d the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, ‘Quick, quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.’ 180
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad. 185
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels — 190
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them: and descending they were ware 195
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice an agony 200
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge';
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens 205
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud, 210
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops 215
 Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls —
 That made his forehead like a rising sun
 High from the daïs-throne — were parch'd with dust ;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips. 220
 So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;
 Not like that Arthur, who, with lance in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tournament,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged,
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings. 225

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere :
 ' Ah, my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
 For now I see the true old times are dead,
 When every morning brought a noble chance, 230
 And every chance brought out a noble knight.
 Such times have been not since the light that lead
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty world ; 235
 And I, the last, go forth companionless,
 And the days darken round me, and the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :
 ' The old order changeth, yielding place to new, 240
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
 Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
 I have lived my life, and that which I have done
 May He within himself make pure ! but thou, 245
 If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats 250
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God. 255
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt) —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, 260
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail 265
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull 270
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

ULYSSES

It little profits that, an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,

That hoard and sleep and feed and know not me. 5
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed
 Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone: on shore, and when
 Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
 Vexed the dim sea: I am become a name;
 For, always roaming with a hungry heart,
 Much have I seen and known; cities of men,
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honored of them all; 15
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
 Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades 20
 Forever and forever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me 25
 Little remains; but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil 35
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.

Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail;
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners, 45
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought
 with me —

That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil; 50

Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep 55
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

Push off, and, sitting well in order, smite
 The sounding furrows: for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
 Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho' 65

We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are:
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from
far away :

"Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have sighted fifty-
three !"

Then sware Lord Thomas Howard : "'Fore God I am
no coward ;

But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of
gear,

And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow
quick.

We are six ships of the line ; can we fight with fifty-
three ?"

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville : "I know you are
no coward ;

You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.

But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick
ashore.

I should count myself the coward if I left them, my
Lord Howard,

To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that
day,

Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven ;

But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the
land

Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below ;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not
left to Spain, 20
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the
Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and
to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came
in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
“Shall we fight or shall we fly ? 25
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die !
There 'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.”
And Sir Richard said again: “We be all good English
men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the
devil, 30
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.”

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a
hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety
sick below ;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left
were seen, 35
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane
between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their
 decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad
 little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hun-
 dred tons, 40
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning
 tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us
 like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud, 45
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the star-
 board lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself
 and went 50
Having that within her womb that had left her ill
 content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us
 hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and
 musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that
 shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land. 55

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far
over the summer sea,

But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and
the fifty-three.

Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built
galleons came,

Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame ;

Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with
her dead and her shame.

60

For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and so
could fight us no more—

God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the
world before ?

X

For he said " Fight on ! fight on ! "

Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;

And it chanced that, when half of the short summer
night was gone,

65

With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly
dead,

And himself he was wounded again in the side and
the head,

And he said " Fight on ! fight on ! "

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far
over the summer sea,

70

And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us
all in a ring ;

But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd that
we still could sting,

So they watch'd what the end would be.
 And we had not fought them in vain,
 But in perilous plight were we, 75
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
 And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
 In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate
 strife;
 And the sick men down in the hold were most of them
 stark and cold,
 And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder
 was all of it spent; 80
 And the masts and the rigging were lying over the
 side;
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
 "We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
 As may never be fought again!
 We have won great glory, my men! 85
 And a day less or more
 At sea or ashore,
 We die — does it matter when?
 Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink her, split her
 in twain!
 Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of
 Spain!" 90

XII

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but the seamen made
 reply:
 "We have children, we have wives,
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.
 We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let
 us go;
 We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow." 95
 And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the
 foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him
then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard
caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly
foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried: 100
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man
and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant
and true, 105
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English
few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they
knew;
But they sank his body with honor down into the
deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien
crew, 110
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her
own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke
from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earth-
quake grew, 115

Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their
 masts and their flags,
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-
 shatter'd navy of Spain,
 And the little Revenge herself went down by the
 island crags
 To be lost evermore in the main.

TO THE QUEEN

REVERED, beloved — O you that hold
 A nobler office upon earth
 Than arms, or power of brains, or birth
 Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, — since your Royal grace
 To one of less desert allows
 This laurel greener from the brows
 Of him that utter'd nothing base ; 5

And should your greatness, and the care
 That yokes with empire, yield you time 10
 To make demand of modern rhyme
 If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
 And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
 Where all about your palace-walls 15
 The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
 For tho' the faults were thick as dust
 In vacant chambers, I could trust
 Your kindness. May you rule us long, 20

And leave us rulers of your blood
 As noble till the latest day!
 May children of our children say,
 "She wrought her people lasting good ;
 "Her court was pure ; her life serene ; 25
 God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
 A thousand claims to reverence closed
 In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;
 "And statesmen at her council met
 Who knew the seasons when to take 30
 Occasion by the hand, and make
 The bounds of freedom wider yet
 "By shaping some august decree,
 Which kept her throne unshaken still,
 Broad-based upon her people's will, 35
 And compass'd by the inviolate sea."

COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD

I

COME into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone ;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

Ii

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon ;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd 15
To the dancers dancing in tune ;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, "There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay. 20
When will the dancers leave her alone ?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day ;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone 25
The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine ? 30
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall ;
And long by the garden lake I stood, 35
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

VII

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs 40
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake 45
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me ; 50
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls, 55
Queen lily and rose in one ;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate. 60
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;
She is coming, my life, my fate ;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near" ;
And the white rose weeps, "She is late" ;
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear" ; 65
And the lily whispers, "I wait,"

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread ,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed ; 70
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead ;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy, 5
That he shouts with his sister at play !
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill ; 10
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
But the tender grace of a day that is dead 15
Will never come back to me.

CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep, 5
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark! 10
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face 15
When I have crost the bar.

ROBERT BROWNING

1812-1889

BROWNING stands with Tennyson — and with Tennyson alone — in the first place among Victorian poets. Tennyson connects the age with the past and perpetuates the tradition of Wordsworth and Keats; Browning, a far more original poet, both in manner and matter, looks forward to the future. This explains the neglect with which his early poems were received by the general public. It was not until half his life was lived and nearly all his best work done, that men began to recognize his greatness. To-day, no one would hesitate to rank him with Tennyson; and in the minds of many he is, if not so finished an artist, a far stronger, more dramatic, and more inspiring poet.

Browning never received the conventional school and college education of the English boy; but he read voluminously at home, studied music as no other English poet since Milton had done, steeped himself in the classics of Greece and Rome, and finally completed his education by repeated visits to Italy. "Italy was my university," he said.

He began early to write poetry, published several long poems, and produced a couple of plays which met with no very great success, though their literary merit was far above that of the most successful dramas of his time. In 1846 he made a most romantic marriage with the greatest English poetess, Miss Elizabeth Barrett. When he first met her she was an invalid confined to her room, and in the opinion of her friends destined to an early death. Her father would not even hear of her marriage; so the lovers ran away, were married privately, and went to Italy, where they spent fifteen years of almost perfect happiness. In 1861 Mrs. Browning died and the poet returned to England, where after a time he threw himself into the busy life of London. As he himself said,

"he lived and liked life's way." He was passionately fond of music and of art, a lover of nature, and an enthusiastic student of the soul of man. He published during this period many volumes of poetry, which were as warmly received as his early work had been neglected. Of these his long poem, *The Ring and the Book*, is perhaps the greatest single achievement in Victorian poetry. He died in 1889 at Venice, and was buried with great state in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Much of Browning's verse is of a character unsuitable for such a collection as this. He loved to ponder on the great questions of life, death, and immortality, to dwell upon the influence of art and passion on the human soul, and he often expressed himself in verse of a sort which needs strong and concentrated thought for its full comprehension. But he is also the author of many charming songs and spirited ballads, and the selections here printed, if they do not give an adequate representation of his work, may yet, at least, serve as an introduction to one of the most vigorous, versatile, and fascinating of English poets.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX

I

I SPRANG to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;
"Good speed !" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
 undrew ;
"Speed !" echoed the wall to us galloping through ;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

5

II

Not a word to each other ; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our
 place ;

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right, 10
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

III

'T was moonset at starting ; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear ;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see ; 15
At Düffeld, 't was morning as plain as could be ;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-
chime,
So, Joris broke silence with, " Yet there is time ! "

IV

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one, 20
To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray :

V

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent
back 25
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track ;
And one eye's black intelligence, — ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance !
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on. 30

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned ; and cried Joris, " Stay
spur !
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault 's not in her,

We 'll remember at Aix " — for one heard the quick
wheeze

Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering
knees,

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank, 35
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky ;
The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like
chaff ; 40

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight !"

VIII

"How they 'll greet us !" — and all in a moment his
roan

Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone ;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight 45
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

IX

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all, 50
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer ;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or
good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

X

And all I remember is — friends flocking round 55
 As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground ;
 And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
 As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
 Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
 Was no more than his due who brought good news from
 Ghent. 60

THE LOST LEADER

I

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat —
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
 Lost all the others she lets us devote ;
 They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver, 5
 So much was theirs who so little allowed :
 How all our copper had gone for his service !
 Rags — were they purple, his heart had been proud !
 We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him,
 Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10
 Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
 Made him our pattern to live and to die !
 Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
 Burns, Shelley, were with us, — they watch from their
 graves !
 He alone breaks from the van and the freemen, 15
 He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves !

II

We shall march prospering, — not thro' his presence ;
 Songs may inspirit us, — not from his lyre ;
 Deeds will be done, — while he boasts his quiescence,
 Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire : 20

Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
 One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
 One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
 One wrong more to man, one more insult to God !
 Life's night begins : let him never come back to us ! 25
 There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
 Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of twilight,
 Never glad confident morning again !
 Best fight on well, for we taught him — strike gallantly,
 Menace our heart ere we master his own ; 30
 Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
 Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne !

MY LAST DUCHESS

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That piece a wonder, now ; Frà Pandolf's hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will 't please you sit and look at her ? I said 5
 "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) 10
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there ; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek : perhaps 15
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint

Half-flush that dies along her throat": such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough 20
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favor at her breast, 25
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech, 30
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but
thanked

Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill 35
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set 40
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands; 45
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence 50
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity, 55
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

I

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how, 5
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall, 10
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall," —
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew 15
Until he reached the mound.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect — 20

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
 Scarce any blood came through)
 You looked twice ere you saw his breast
 Was all but shot in two.

IV

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace 25
 We've got you Ratisbon!
 The Marshal's in the market-place,
 And you'll be there anon
 To see your flag-bird flap his vans
 Where I, to heart's desire, 30
 Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his
 plans
 Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
 Softened itself, as sheathes
 A film the mother-eagle's eye 35
 When her bruised eaglet breathes;
 "You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
 Touched to the quick, he said:
 "I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside
 Smiling the boy fell dead. 40

BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
 Rescue my castle before the hot day
 Brightens to blue from its silvery grey,
 CHORUS. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you 'd say: 5
 Many 's the friend there, will listen and pray
 "God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —
 CHORUS. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
 Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array: 10
 Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
 CHORUS. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
 Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
 I've better counsellors; what counsel they? 15
 CHORUS. — Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

From

PIPPA PASSES

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

THE year's at the spring
 And day's at the morn;
 Morning's at seven;
 The hillside's dew-pearled;
 The lark's on the wing; 5
 The snail's on the thorn:
 God's in his heaven —
 All's right with the world!

MATTHEW ARNOLD

1822-1888

ARNOLD was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous Head Master of Rugby. His early training was received at Winchester and at Rugby, and afterwards he went to Oxford, where he won a fellowship. Not very long after he left Oxford he was appointed inspector of schools by the government. His best energies were given to the duties of this position during a period of thirty years. These years of toil were a solid contribution to the workaday side of life. During this period his literary faculties, however, were far from idle. Besides his poetry he wrote many essays, which give him an exceedingly high place as a literary critic.

Arnold's literary work does not fill a very wide space. Two or three volumes will contain his chief essays, while his poetry may be put into a still smaller compass. Among his poems, the best known are *Sohrab and Rustum*, *The Scholar-Gipsy*, *Rugby Chapel*, and *The Forsaken Merman*. These poems do not place Arnold among the greatest poets of the century, but their earnestness, elevation, delicacy of feeling, grace, and pathos appeal strongly to readers of cultivated tastes.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

COME, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,

5

Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go — 10
Call once yet!

In a voice that she will know:

“Margaret! Margaret!”

Children’s voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear; 15

Children’s voices, wild with pain —

Surely she will come again!

Call her once and come away;

This way, this way!

“Mother dear, we cannot stay! 20

The wild white horses foam and fret.”

Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;

Call no more!

One last look at the white-wall’d town, 25

And the little grey church on the windy shore;

Then come down!

She will not come though you call all day;

Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday 30

We heard the sweet bells over the bay?

In the caverns where we lay,

Through the surf and through the swell,

The far-off sound of a silver bell?

Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep, 35

Where the winds are all asleep;

Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,

Where the salt weed sways in the stream,

Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ; 40
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ? 45
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sate with you and me, 50
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea ; 55
She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'T will be Easter-time in the world — ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with thee."
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ; 60
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves !"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
" The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ; 65
Long prayers," I said, " in the world they say ;
Come ! " I said ; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town ;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still, 70

To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
panes.

75

She sate by the pillar : we saw her clear :
"Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone ;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book !
Loud prays the priest : shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more !
Come away, come down, call no more !

80

Down, down, down !
Down to the depths of the sea !
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings : "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy !
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun !"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,

85

90

95

100

From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ; 105
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;
Come children, come down !
The hoarse wind blows coldly ; 110
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar. 115
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing : " Here came a mortal, 120
But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow, 125
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly 130
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed

The ebb-tide leaves dry. 135
 We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
 At the white, sleeping town ;
 At the church on the hill-side —
 And then come back down.
 Singing : “ There dwells a loved one, 140
 But cruel is she !
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea.”

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

COLDLY, sadly descends
 The autumn evening. The field
 Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
 Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,
 Fade into dimness apace, 5
 Silent ; — hardly a shout
 From a few boys late at their play !
 The lights come out in the street,
 In the school-room windows ; — but cold,
 Solemn, unlighted, austere, 10
 Through the gathering darkness, arise
 The chapel-walls, in whose bound
 Thou, my father ! art laid.

 Fifteen years have gone round
 Since thou arosest to tread,
 In the summer-morning, the road
 Of death, at a call unforeseen,
 Sudden. For fifteen years, 30
 We who till then in thy shade

Rested as under the boughs
 Of a mighty oak, have endured
 Sunshine and rain as we might,
 Bare, unshaded, alone, 35
 Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
 Tarriest thou now? For that force,
 Surely, has not been left vain!
 Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
 In the sounding labour-house vast
 Of being, is practised that strength,
 Zealous, beneficent, firm!

What is the course of the life
 Of mortal men on the earth?—
 Most men eddy about 60
 Here and there—eat and drink,
 Chatter and love and hate,
 Gather and squander, are raised
 Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
 Striving blindly, achieving 65
 Nothing; and then they die—
 Perish;—and no one asks
 Who or what they have been,
 More than he asks what waves,
 In the moonlit solitudes mild 70
 Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
 Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
 Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
 Not with the crowd to be spent, 75
 Not without aim to go round

In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die 80
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear purposed goal, 85
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm. 90
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breach'd
The track, the stream-bed descends 95
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep—the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas, 100
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips 105
Sternly compress'd, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host 110

Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring? 115
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through, 120
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone* 125
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die. 130
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet, 135
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given 140
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,

O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe 145
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honour'd and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see — 150
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind, 165
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died! 170

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? — A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal. 175
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host 180

Threatens to break, to dissolve.
— Ah, keep, keep them combined !
Else of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive ;
Sole they shall stray ; in the rocks 185
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear, 190
Radiant with ardour divine !
Beacons of hope, ye appear !
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow. 195
Ye alight in our van ! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave ! 200
Order, courage, return,
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line, 205
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

REQUIESCAT

STREW on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required; 5
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound, 10
But for peace her heart was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit 15
The vasty hall of death.

A VICTORIAN MISCELLANY

IT is more difficult to make a satisfactory selection from the minor poets of the Victorian era than from those of any previous period. That age is still too recent for us to pass a final judgment upon its work. Time alone can show whether a poem which pleased its day is a true classic, and the verdict of time has not yet been rendered on Victorian poetry. This is especially true in regard to the minor poets.

There are, moreover, special difficulties in the way of making a selection from the poetry of this age, which shall fall within the limits set by the purpose of this book. In the first place, the age was, perhaps, the most complex and multiform in English history, and this characteristic has been reflected in its literature. There has been no dominant form of poetry, such as the drama of Elizabeth's reign or the satire and didactic poetry of the Augustan age. The poets of the Victorian era ranged over all the forms of their art; they tried their hands at the epic, the drama, and the lyric; they wrote noble philosophic, didactic, and elegiac poems. It is quite impossible, therefore, for a short selection, such as must here be made, to reflect with any degree of adequacy the complex character of Victorian verse.

There is also another difficulty: the Victorian age was a period of intense self-consciousness in art. And along with this self-consciousness went an increasing struggle for originality, for the new word, the new image, the new rhythm. As a result, the greater part of Victorian poetry demands, more than that of other periods, a trained literary taste for its appreciation. But the purpose of this book is not so much to gratify the cultivated literary taste as to awaken an interest in poetry; and the simplicity and directness

of expression which may be relied on to awaken such an interest are conspicuously absent in many fine and characteristic poems of the Victorian age.

The poems gathered in this miscellany must of necessity, then, represent only certain aspects of the age. One of its striking characteristics was the revival of the short narrative poem, the modern ballad. The lyric note, too, which rang with such force and passion in the preceding age, from Burns to Byron, is heard on every side in the poetry of this period. And if the Victorian lyrics lack the fresh charm of the Elizabethan or the careless grace of the Cavalier songs, they have a beauty of their own, perhaps even more tender and more human. This miscellany, then, attempts for the most part to represent only the songs and ballads of the Victorian age. Some, at least, of the poems gathered here are such as the world, we may well believe, will not willingly let die.

TWENTY YEARS HENCE

TWENTY years hence my eyes may grow
If not quite dim, yet rather so,
Yet yours from others they shall know
Twenty years hence.

Twenty years hence, though it may hap 5
That I be called to take a nap
In a cool cell where thunder clap
Was never heard,

There breathe but o'er my arch of grass,
A not too sadly sighed 'Alas!' 10
And I shall catch ere you can pass
That wingéd word.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

ROBERT BROWNING

THERE is delight in singing, though none hear
 Beside the singer ; and there is delight
 In praising, though the praiser sit alone
 And see the prais'd far off him, far above.
 Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's ; 5
 Therefore on him no speech ! and brief for thee,
 Browning ! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
 No man hath walk'd along our roads with step
 So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
 So varied in discourse. But warmer climes 10
 Give brighter plumage, stronger wing : the breeze
 Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
 Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
 The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

THE SEA

THE sea ! the sea ! the open sea !
 The blue, the fresh, the ever free !
 Without a mark, without a bound,
 It runneth the earth's wide regions round ;
 It plays with the clouds ; it mocks the skies ; 5
 Or like a cradled creature lies.

I 'm on the sea ! I 'm on the sea !
 I am where I would ever be ;
 With the blue above, and the blue below,
 And silence wheresoe'er I go ; 10
 If a storm should come and awake the deep,
 What matter ? I shall ride and sleep.

I love, O, how I love to ride
On the fierce, foaming, bursting tide, *
When every mad wave drowns the moon, 15
Or whistles aloft his tempest tune,
And tells how goeth the world below,
And why the sou'west blasts do blow.

I never was on the dull, tame shore,
But I loved the great sea more and more, 20
And backwards flew to her billowy breast,
Like a bird that seeketh its mother's nest;
And a mother she was, and is, to me;
For I was born on the open sea !

The waves were white, and red the morn, 25
In the noisy hour when I was born;
And the whale it whistled, the porpoise roll'd,
And the dolphins bared their backs of gold;
And never was heard such an outcry wild
As welcom'd to life the ocean-child ! 30

I've lived since then, in calm and strife,
Full fifty summers, a sailor's life,
With wealth to spend and a power to range,
But never have sought nor sighed for change;
And Death, whenever he comes to me, 35
Shall come on the wild, unbounded sea !

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY

BY OBADIAH BIND-THEIR-KINGS-IN-
CHAINS-AND-THEIR-NOBLES-WITH-
LINKS-OF-IRON, SERGEANT IN
IRETON'S REGIMENT.

OH! wherefore come ye forth in triumph from the
north,

With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all
red?

And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous
shout?

And whence be the grapes of the wine-press that ye
tread?

Oh! evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit, 5

And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the
strong,

Who sate in the high places and slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
That we saw their banners dance and their cuirasses
shine, 10

And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essenced
hair,

And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the
Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The general rode along us to form us for the fight;
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swell'd into a
shout 15

Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line:
For God! for the Cause! for the Church! for the Laws!
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine! 20

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his
drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks! Grasp your pikes!
Close your ranks!
For Rupert never comes, but to conquer, or to fall.

They are here—they rush on—we are broken—we
are gone— 25
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might! O Lord, defend the
right!
Stand back to back, in God's name! and fight it to
the last!

Stout Skippon hath a wound—the centre hath given
ground.
Hark! hark! what means the trampling of horsemen
on our rear? 30
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he! thank God!
'tis he, boys!
Bear up another minute! Brave Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the
dikes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the Accurst, 35
And at a shock have scatter'd the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide,
Their coward heads, predestin'd to rot on Temple Bar;
And he — he turns! he flies! shame on those cruel eyes
That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war! 40

Ho, comrades! scour the plain; and ere you strip the
 slain,
First give another stab to make your search secure;
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces
 and locketts,
The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Fools! your doublets shone with gold, and your hearts
 were gay and bold, 45
When you kissed your lily hands to your lemans to-day;
And to-morrow shall the fox from her chamber in the
 rocks
Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl above the prey.

Where be your tongues, that late mock'd at heaven and
 hell and fate?
And the fingers that were once so busy with your
 blades? 50
Your perfum'd satin clothes, your catches and your
 oaths?
Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and
 your spades?

Down, down, for ever down with the mitre and the
 crown,
With the Belial of the court, and the Mammon of the
 Pope!

There is woe in Oxford halls, there is wail in Durham's
 stalls ; 55
 The Jesuit smites his bosom, the bishop rends his cope.

And She of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
 And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's
 sword ;
 And the kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they
 hear
 What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses
 and the Word ! 60

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

From

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

I

I THOUGHT how once Theocritus had sung
 Of the sweet years, the dear and wish'd-for years,
 Who each one in a gracious hand appears
 To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
 And, as I mus'd it in his antique tongue, 5
 I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
 The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
 Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
 A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
 So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move 10
 Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
 And a voice said in mastery, while I strove, —
 "Guess now who holds thee !" — "Death," I said.

But, there,
 The silver answer rang — "Not Death, but Love."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin, and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat 5
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay, 10
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hack'd and hew'd as a great god can, 15
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of a leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!) 20
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notch'd the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laugh'd the great god Pan, 25
(Laugh'd while he sat by the river,)
"The only way, since gods began

To make sweet music, they could succeed."
 Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
 He blew in power by the river. 30

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
 Piercing sweet by the river!
 Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
 The sun on the hill forgot to die,
 And the lilies reviv'd, and the dragon-fly 35
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
 To laugh as he sits by the river,
 Making a poet out of a man:
 The true gods sigh for the cost and pain, — 40
 For the reed which grows never more again
 As a reed with the reeds in the river.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

MOTHER AND POET

TURIN, AFTER NEWS FROM GAETA, 1861

DEAD! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
 And one of them shot in the west by the sea.
 Dead! both my boys! When you sit at the feast
 And are wanting a great song for Italy free,
 Let none look at *me*! 5

Yet I was a poetess only last year,
 And good at my art, for a woman, men said;
 But *this* woman, *this* who is agoniz'd here,
 — The east sea and the west sea rhyme on in
 her head
 For ever instead. 10

What art can a woman be good at? Oh, vain!
 What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast
 With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain?
 Ah boys, how you hurt! you were strong as you
 press'd,
 And I proud, by that test.

15

What art 's for a woman? To hold on her knees
 Both darlings: to feel all their arms round her throat,
 Cling, strangle a little, to sew by degrees
 And 'broider the long-clothes and neat little coat;
 To dream and to doat.

20

To teach them... It stings there! *I* made them
 indeed
 Speak plain the word *country*. *I* taught them, no
 doubt,
 That a country 's a thing men should die for at need.
I prated of liberty, rights, and about
 The tyrant cast out.

25

And when their eyes flashed... O my beautiful eyes!...
 I exulted; nay, let them go forth at the wheels
 Of the guns, and denied not. But then the surprise
 When one sits quite alone! Then one weeps, then
 one kneels!
 God, how the house feels!

30

At first, happy news came, in gay letters moil'd
 With my kisses, — of camp-life and glory, and how
 They both lov'd me; and, soon coming home to be
 spoil'd,
 In return would fan off every fly from my brow
 With their green laurel-bough.

35

Then was triumph at Turin: "Ancona was free!"

And some one came out of the cheers in the street,
With a face pale as stone, to say something to me.

My Guido was dead! I fell down at his feet,

While they cheer'd in the street.

40

I bore it; friends sooth'd me; my grief look'd sublime

As the ransom of Italy. One boy remain'd

To be leant on and walk'd with, recalling the time

When the first grew immortal, while both of us
strain'd

To the height he had gain'd.

45

And letters still came, shorter, sadder, more strong,

Writ now but in one hand, "I was not to faint, —

One lov'd me for two — would be with me ere long:

And *Viva l' Italia!* — *he* died for, our saint,

Who forbids our complaint."

50

My Nanni would add, "he was safe, and aware

Of a presence that turn'd off the balls, — was impress'd

It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear,

And how 't was impossible, quite dispossess'd,

To live on for the rest."

55

On which, without pause, up the telegraph-line,

Swept smoothly the next news from Gaeta: — *Shot.*

Tell his mother. Ah, ah, "his," "their" mother, — not
"mine,"

No voice says "*My* mother" again to me. What!

You think Guido forgot?

60

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven,

They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe?

I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven
Through That Love and Sorrow which reconcil'd so
The Above and Below. 65

O Christ of the five wounds, who look'dst through the
dark

To the face of Thy mother! consider, I pray,
How we common mothers stand desolate, mark,
Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turn'd
away,
And no last word to say! 70

Both boys dead? but that's out of nature. We all
Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep
one.

'T were imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall;
And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done
If we have not a son? 75

Ah, ah, ah! when Gaeta's taken, what then?

When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport
Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men?
When the guns of Cavalli with final retort
Have cut the game short? 80

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,
When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green,
and red,

When *you* have your country from mountain to sea,
When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,
(And *I* have my Dead) — 85

What then? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low,
And burn your lights faintly! *My* country is *there*,

Above the star prick'd by the last peak of snow :

My Italy's *there*, with my brave civic Pair,
To disfranchise despair.

90

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,
And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn ;
But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length
Into wail such as this — and we sit on forlorn
When the man-child is born.

95

Dead ! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
And one of them shot in the west by the sea,
Both ! both my boys ! If in keeping the feast
You want a great song for your Italy free,
Let none look at *me*.

100

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

[This was Laura Savio, of Turin, a poet and patriot, whose sons were killed at Ancona and Gaeta.]

THE END OF THE PLAY

THE play is done — the curtain drops,
Slow falling to the prompter's bell ;
A moment yet the actor stops,
And looks around, to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task ;
And, when he's laugh'd and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
A face that's anything but gay.

5

One word, ere yet the evening ends :
Let's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
As fits the merry Christmas time ;

10

On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
That fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good-night! — with honest gentle hearts 15
A kindly greeting go away!

Good-night! — I'd say the griefs, the joys,
Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
Are but repeated in our age; 20
I'd say your woes were not less keen,
Your hopes more vain, than those of men,
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
At forty-five played o'er again.

I'd say we suffer and we strive 25
Not less nor more as men than boys,
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
As erst at twelve in corduroys;
And if, in time of sacred youth,
We learn'd at home to love and pray, 30
Pray heaven that early love and truth
May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
I'd say how fate may change and shift,
The prize be sometimes with the fool, 35
The race not always to the swift;
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
The kind cast pitilessly down. 40

Who knows the inscrutable design?
Blessed be He who took and gave!

Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
Be weeping at her darling's grave?
We bow to Heaven that will'd it so, 45
That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
That's free to give or to recall.

This crowns his feast with wine and wit —
Who brought him to that mirth and state? 50
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we'll kneel, 55
Confessing Heaven that rul'd it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely kill'd,
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfulfill'd. 60
Amen! — whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whiten'd with the winter snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill, 65
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the awful will,
And bear it with an honest heart.
Who misses or who wins the prize —
Go, lose or conquer as you can; 70
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young!
 (Bear kindly with my humble lays;)
 The sacred chorus first was sung 75
 Upon the first of Christmas days;
 The shepherds heard it overhead —
 The joyful angels rais'd it then:
 Glory to Heaven on high, it said,
 And peace on earth to gentle men! 80

My song, save this, is little worth;
 I lay the weary pen aside,
 And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
 As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
 As fits the holy Christmas birth, 85
 Be this, good friends, our carol still:
 Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
 To men of gentle will.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

THE LAST BUCCANEER

OH, England is a pleasant place for them that's rich
 and high;

But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
 And such a port for Mariners I ne'er shall see again,
 As the pleasant Isle of Avés, beside the Spanish main.

There were forty craft in Avés that were both swift
 and stout,

All furnish'd well with small arms and cannons round
 about:

And a thousand men in Avés made laws so fair and free
 To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sail'd against the Spaniard with his
 hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung by cruel tortures from the Indian
 folk of old; 10
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard
 as stone,
Which flog men and keel-haul them and starve them
 to the bone.

Oh, the palms grew high in Avés and fruits that shone
 like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to
 behold;
And the negro maids to Avés from bondage fast did flee, 15
To welcome gallant sailors a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh, sweet it was in Avés to hear the landward breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you while you listen'd to
 the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside that never touched
 the shore. 20

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things must be,
So the King's ships sail'd on Avés and quite put
 down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they burst the
 booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua sore wounded from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside, 25
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing
 she died;

But as I lay a-gasping a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here to beg until
I die.

And now I'm old and going I'm sure I can't tell
where;

One comfort is, this world's so hard I can't be worse
off there:

30

If I might but be a sea-dove I'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Avés, to look at it once
again.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE 'OLD, OLD SONG'

WHEN all the world is young, lad,

And all the trees are green;

And every goose a swan, lad,

And every lass a queen;

Then hey for boot and horse, lad,

5

And round the world away;

Young blood must have its course, lad,

And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,

And all the trees are brown;

10

And all the sport is stale, lad,

And all the wheels run down:

Creep home, and take your place there,

The spent and maimed among:

God grant you find one face there

15

You loved when all was young.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE THREE TROOPERS

DURING THE PROTECTORATE

INTO the Devil tavern

Three booted troopers strode,
From spur to feather spotted and splash'd
With the mud of a winter road.
In each of their cups they dropp'd a crust, 5
And star'd at the guests with a frown ;
Then drew their swords, and roar'd for a toast,
"God send this Crum-well-down !"

A blue smoke rose from their pistol locks,
Their sword blades were still wet ; 10
There were long red smears on their jerkins of buff,
As the table they overset.
Then into their cups they stirr'd the crusts,
And curs'd old London town ;
Then wav'd their swords, and drank with a stamp, 15
"God send this Crum-well-down !"

The 'prentice dropped his can of beer,
The host turn'd pale as a clout ;
'The ruby nose of the toping squire
Grew white at the wild men's shout. 20
Then into their cups they flung the crusts,
And show'd their teeth with a frown ;
They flash'd their swords as they gave the toast,
"God send this Crum-well-down !"

The gambler dropp'd his dog's-ear'd cards, 25
The waiting-women scream'd,
As the light of the fire, like stains of blood,
On the wild men's sabres gleam'd.

Then into their cups they splash'd the crusts,
 And curs'd the fool of a town, 30
 And leap'd on the table, and roar'd a toast,
 "God send this Crum-well-down!"

Till on a sudden fire-bells rang,
 And the troopers sprang to horse;
 And the eldest mutter'd between his teeth, 35
 Hot curses deep and coarse.

In their stirrup cups they flung the crusts,
 And cried as they spur'd through the town,
 With their keen swords drawn and their pistols cock'd,
 "God send this Crum-well-down!" 40

Away they dash'd through Temple Bar,
 Their red cloaks flowing free,
 Their scabbards clash'd, each back-piece shone -
 None lik'd to touch the three.
 The silver cups that held the crusts 45
 They flung to the startled town,
 Shouting again, with a blaze of swords,
 "God send this Crum-well-down!"

GEORGE WALTER THORNBURY.

MARY MAGDALENE

AT THE DOOR OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

(For a drawing by D. G. R.)

"Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
 Nay, be thou all a rose, — wreath, lips, and cheek.

¹ In the drawing Mary has left a procession of revellers, and is ascending by a sudden impulse the steps of the house where she sees Christ. Her lover has followed her, and is trying to turn her back.

Nay, not this house, — that banquet-house we seek ;
 See how they kiss and enter ; come thou there.
 This delicate day of love we two will share 5
 Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak.
 What, sweet one, — hold'st thou still the foolish freak?
 Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair."

"Oh loose me ! Seest thou not my Bridegroom's face
 That draws me to Him ? For His feet my kiss, 10
 My hair, my tears He craves to-day : — and oh !
 What words can tell what other day and place
 Shall see me clasp those blood-stain'd feet of His ?
 He needs me, calls me, loves me : let me go !"

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

ALAS, SO LONG !

AH ! dear one, we were young so long,
 It seemed that youth would never go,
 For skies and trees were ever in song
 And water in singing flow
 In the days we never again shall know. 5

Alas, so long !

Ah ! then was it all Spring weather ?
 Nay, but we were young and together.

Ah ! dear one, I've been old so long,
 It seems that age is loth to part, 10
 Though days and years have never a song,
 And oh ! have they still the art
 That warmed the pulses of heart to heart ?

Alas, so long !

Ah ! then was it all Spring weather ? 15
 Nay, but we were young and together.

Ah! dear one, you've been dead so long, —

How long until we meet again,
Where hours may never lose their song

Nor flowers forget the rain

20

In glad noonlight that shall never wane?

Alas, so long!

Ah! shall it be then Spring weather,
And ah! shall we be young together?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

RIDING TOGETHER

FOR many, many days together

The wind blew steady from the East;

For many days hot grew the weather,

About the time of our Lady's feast.

For many days we rode together,

5

Yet we met neither friend nor foe;

Hotter and clearer grew the weather,

Steadily did the East wind blow.

We saw the trees in the hot, bright weather,

Clear-cut, with shadows very black,

10

As freely we rode on together

With helms unlaced and bridles slack.

And often as we rode together,

We, looking down the green-bank'd stream,

Saw flowers in the sunny weather,

15

And saw the bubble-making bream.

And in the night lay down together,

And hung above our heads the rood,

Or watch'd night-long in the dewy weather,

The while the moon did watch the wood.

20

Our spears stood bright and thick together,
Straight out the banners stream'd behind,
As we gallop'd on in sunny weather,
With faces turn'd toward the wind.

Down sank our threescore spears together, 25
As thick as we saw the pagans ride;
His eager face in the clear fresh weather,
Shone out that last time by my side.

Up the sweep of the bridge we dash'd together,
It rock'd to the crash of the meeting spears, 30
Down rain'd the buds of the dear spring weather,
The elm-tree flowers fell like tears.

There, as we roll'd and writhed together,
I threw my arms above my head,
For close by my side, in the lovely weather, 35
I saw him reel and fall back dead.

I and the slayer met together,
He waited the death-stroke there in his place,
With thoughts of death, in the lovely weather,
Gapingly mazed at my madden'd face. 40

Madly I fought as we fought together;
In vain: the little Christian band
The pagans drown'd, as in stormy weather,
The river drowns low-lying land.

They bound my blood-stain'd hands together, 45
They bound his corpse to nod by my side:
Then on we rode, in the bright March weather,
With clash of cymbals did we ride.

We ride no more, no more together;
My prison-bars are thick and strong, 50
I take no heed of any weather,
The sweet Saints grant I live not long.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

From

ATALANTA IN CALYDON

WHEN the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous 5
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light, 10
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers, 15
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
Oh that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring! 20
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over, 25
 And all the season of snows and sins ;
 The days dividing lover and lover,
 The light that loses, the night that wins ;
 And time remembered is grief forgotten,
 And frosts are slain and flowers begotten, 30
 And in green underwood and cover
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

 The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
 The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes 35
 From leaf to flower and flower to fruit ;
 And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,
 And the hoofed heel of a satyr crushes
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root. 40

 And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with delight
 The Mænad and the Bassarid ;
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide, 45
 The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
 And screen from seeing and leave in sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

 The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows, hiding her eyes ; 50
 The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
 Her bright breast shortening into sighs ;
 The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
 But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
 To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare 55
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

A MATCH

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes, 5
Green pleasure or gray grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune, 10
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are, 15
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather 20
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow, 25
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy; 30

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours 35
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May. 40

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure, 45
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

ADIEUX À MARIE STUART

I

QUEEN, for whose house my fathers fought,
With hopes that rose and fell,
Red star of boyhood's fiery thought,
Farewell.

They gave their lives, and I, my queen, 5
Have given you of my life,
Seeing your brave star burn high between
Men's strife.

The strife that lightened round their spears
Long since fell still: so long 10
Hardly may hope to last in years
My song.

But still through strife of time and thought
Your light on me too fell:
Queen, in whose name we sang or fought, 15
• Farewell.

II

There beats no heart on either border
Wherethrough the north blasts blow
But keeps your memory as a warder
His beacon-fire aglow. 20

Long since it fired with love and wonder
Mine, for whose April age
Blithe midsummer made banquet under
The shade of Hermitage.

Soft sang the burn's blithe notes, that gather 25
Strength to ring true:
And air and trees and sun and heather
Remembered you.

Old border ghosts of fight or fairy
Or love or teen, 30
These they forgot, remembering Mary
The Queen.

.

IV

Love hangs like light about your name
As music round the shell: 50
No heart can take of you a tame
Farewell.

Yet, when your very face was seen,
 Ill gifts were yours for giving:
 Love gat strange guerdons of my queen 55
 When living.

O diamond heart unflawed and clear,
 The whole world's crowning jewel!
 Was ever heart so deadly dear
 So cruel? 60

Yet none for you of all that bled
 Grudged once one drop that fell:
 Not one to life reluctant said
 Farewell.

.

VI

Forgive them all their praise, who blot
 Your fame with praise of you:
 Then love may say, and falter not
 Adieu.

Yet some you hardly would forgive 85
 Who did you much less wrong
 Once: but resentment should not live
 Too long.

They never saw your lip's bright bow,
 Your swordbright eyes, 90
 The bluest of heavenly things below
 The skies.

Clear eyes that love's self finds most like
 A swordblade's blue,
 A swordblade's ever keen to strike, 95
 Adieu.

VII

Though all things breathe or sound of fight
 That yet make up your spell,
 To bid you were to bid the light
 Farewell.

100

Farewell the song says only, being
 A star whose race is run:
 Farewell the soul says never, seeing
 The sun.

Yet, wellnigh as with flash of tears,
 The song must say but so
 That took your praise up twenty years
 Ago.

105

More bright than stars or moons that vary,
 Sun kindling heaven and hell,
 Here, after all these years, Queen Mary,
 Farewell.

110

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

WANDERING WILLIE

HOME no more home to me, whither must I wander?
 Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
 Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather;
 Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
 Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree, 5
 The true word of welcome was spoken in the door —
 Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
 Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
 Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child. 10

Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
 Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
 Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
 Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
 Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed, 15
 The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the
 place of old.

Spring shall come, come again, calling up the moor-fowl,
 Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees
 and flowers;
 Red shall the heather bloom over hill and valley,
 Soft flow the stream through the even-flowing hours; 20
 Fair the day shine as it shone on my childhood —
 Fair shine the day on the house with open door;
 Birds come and cry there and twitter in the chimney —
 But I go forever and come again no more.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

REQUIEM

UNDER the wide and starry sky,
 Dig the grave and let me lie.
 Glad did I live and gladly die,
 And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me: 5
*Here he lies where he longed to be;
 Home is the sailor, home from sea,
 And the hunter home from the hill.*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

LEAD, kindly light, amid th' encircling gloom,
 Lead Thou me on;
 The night is dark, and I am far from home;
 Lead Thou me on;
 Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see 5
 The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
 Shouldst lead me on;
 I loved to choose and see my path; but now
 Lead Thou me on! 10
 I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
 Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

So long Thy Power hath blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on
 O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till 15
 The night is gone,
 And with the morn those angel faces smile
 Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

RECESSIONAL

GOD of our fathers, known of old —
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line —
 Beneath Whose awful Hand we hold
 Dominion over palm and pine —
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, 5
 Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies —
The captains and the kings depart —
Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart. 10
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away —
On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday 15
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe — 20
Such boastings as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust 25
In reeking tube and iron shard —
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard —
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord! 30
Amen.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

NOTES

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE selections in this volume are taken from the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*. These tales are a collection of stories supposed to be told by a group of pilgrims who are journeying on horseback to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. Becket was at one time Chancellor to Henry II, and later was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury by the king. A violent quarrel arose between them, and the king finally became so angered that he exclaimed in a fit of rage: "Of the cowards who eat my bread, is there not one who will free me from this turbulent priest?" Four of the king's knights straightway went to Canterbury and murdered Becket in the cathedral where he had taken refuge.

This act so aroused popular indignation that the king was forced to kneel at Becket's tomb at Canterbury and ask the monks to flog him as a punishment for the crime. Becket was canonized as a martyr, and it was a common thing for crowds to go to Canterbury to pray at his tomb. Many went with the hope of being healed of disease, both of the body and of the soul; others made the journey in a holiday mood.

Chaucer's pilgrims, twenty-nine in number, start on horseback from the Tabard Inn at Southwark, a suburb of London. They represent every station in life, — in the party were a knight, a monk, a scholar, a parson, a miller, a shipman, and a cook, — and they were united by one common tie, religion. Then, too, the comradeship of the highway largely brushed away whatever feeling of class distinction there may have been among the travelers. At any rate, it was a merry gathering. The jolly host of the Tabard suggests that each member of the company tell two stories, both going and coming, and that the pilgrim who tells the best story shall have a supper at the inn on their return at the cost of all the rest. The host also offers to go along and act as judge. The red-bearded miller leads the company out of town with his bagpipe.

In the *Prologue*, Chaucer gives a series of vivid and lifelike pictures of these twenty-nine pilgrims, portraying with a deft touch both their physical and moral qualities. As might be expected, the first picture is that of the Knight. It was an age of feudalism, and in that age the soldier was the central figure. Chaucer had lived on friendly terms with high-bred men of arms, and he here shows us his conception of a perfect knight, — brave, honorable, clean-minded, courteous and generous, modest and gentle. The Knight's son, the young Squire, is described in a more playful manner, yet with entire sympathy. In addition to youthful gayety and high spirits, he has all the accomplishments of a well-born and well-bred young man who aspires to distinction in arms.

The Shipman was a man of wholly different type; but he was a representative of a class common in Chaucer's day. He was a sturdy sailor, a master of his trade, half pirate, not troubled with a scrupulous conscience; yet Chaucer calls him "a good felawe."

The portrait of the Parson is, by common consent, the best picture of its kind in literature. Dryden admired it and paraphrased it, and Goldsmith no doubt had it in mind when he described the country parson in *The Deserted Village*. Chaucer's parson is modestly but genuinely pious, conscientious, industrious, unselfish, kind, preaching no less eloquently by example than by word. The portrait was meant by Chaucer as a rebuke to the more selfish and worldly monks of the religious orders, many of whom were notorious for the profligacy of their lives.

THE KNIGHT

LINE 1. Knight, a title of rank generally conferred upon men of gentle birth for bravery in battle. — worthy, worthy of honor, distinguished.

4. freedom, generosity.

5. his lordés werré, God's wars, the Crusades. It may refer to the king of England's wars.

6. no man ferré, no man further.

9. Alisaundre, Alexandria, in Egypt.

10. the bord bigonné, sat at the head of the table. This place was often assigned to him at banquets out of respect for his bravery.

11. naciouns. Men from all nations came to Prussia to aid the Teutonic knights in their wars against the surrounding heathen. — Prucé, Prussia.

13. Tramissené, Tramessen, a Moorish kingdom in Africa. The Moors were Mohammedans.

14. listés, lists, inclosed places for combats or tournaments.
16. Palatyé, Palatium, a strip of country in Asia Minor which was taken from the Turks by the Christian knights.
18. a sovereyn prys, very great fame.
21. vileinye, "any language unbecoming a gentleman."
22. no maner wight, no sort of person.
25. hors, horses. It is an old neuter plural. — he was nat gay, he was not gaudily dressed.
26. fustian, a coarse twilled cloth. — gipoun, a tight-fitting, sleeveless coat.
27. Al bismotered with his habergeoun, stained with rust from his coat of mail.
28. viagé, voyage, travels abroad.

THE SQUIRE

- LINE 1. Squyer, a knight's attendant and armor-bearer.
2. bachelor, a candidate for knighthood.
 3. crulle, curled.
 5. of evene lengthé, of average height.
 6. wonderly delivere, extremely quick and active.
 7. chivachyé, cavalry raids.
 8. Flaundrés, Artoys, Picardyé, Flanders. Artois, Picardy, districts in northern France, where many battles between the French and English were fought.
 9. as of so litel spacé, in consideration of his youth.
 10. his lady gracé, his lady's favor.
 11. Embrouded, embroidered.
 13. floytinge, playing on a flute.
 17. endyté, compose.
 18. Iuste, joust or just, to thrust with the lance at an opponent in single combat on horseback. — purtreye, draw.
 19. nightertalé, night-time.
 22. The ability to carve at table was considered one of the accomplishments of a candidate for knighthood.

THE SHIPMAN

- LINE 1. woning fer by westé, dwelling far to the westward.
2. Dertemouthé, Dartmouth, a seaport town in the southwest of England. In Chaucer's day it was an important shipping center.

3. rouncy, a heavy horse, hired by the Shipman, and unsuited for the saddle. — as he couthé, as well as he knew how. Sailors are often poor horsemen.

4. falding, a kind of coarse cloth.

5. a laas, a string or band.

8. a good felawé, a pleasant fellow. Chaucer applies the term to other disreputable people besides the Shipman.

9-10. Many a cask of wine he had stolen and carried away from Bordeaux, France, while the merchant was asleep.

11. He did not have a scrupulous conscience.

12. the hyer hond, the upper hand.

13. He made them walk the plank.

14. his craft, the art of navigation.

15. stremés, currents in the sea. — him bisydés, near him.

16. herberwe here means the resting place or position of the sun in the heavens at any given time. — lodemenagé, pilotage.

17. Hullé, Hull, a seaport town in the north of England. — Cartagé, Carthage, a city on the north coast of Africa.

18. He was bold, but prudent, in his undertakings.

21. Gootlond, Gottland, an island in the Baltic Sea. — Finisteré, Cape Finisterre, on the northwest coast of Spain.

23. y-cleped, called, named. — Maudelayné, Magdalen.

THE PARSON

LINE 2. povré, poor.

4. clerk, a scholar.

9. And such he was proved oftentimes.

10. He was loath to excommunicate, or cut off from the sacraments of the church, those who failed to pay their tithes. — to cursen refers to the formal ceremony of excommunication. — tythés, tithes, a tax of one-tenth of a man's income for the support of the clergy and the church.

11. yeven, to give. — out of douté, undoubtedly.

13. offering, money given by his parishioners of their own free will. — substauncé, income from the endowment of the church.

14. It did not take much to satisfy his wants.

16. ne lafté nat, ceased not.

17. meschief, misfortune.

18. ferreste, furthest. — moche and lyté, people of both high and low degree.

- 20. *yaf*, gave.
- 22. *tho*, those.
- 26. *lewéd*, unlearned.
- 27. *také keep*, take heed.
- 31. *benefice*, a church office endowed with funds or property for the maintenance of divine service. It was a common practice in Chaucer's day for ecclesiastics to let their benefices at a lower figure and then to pocket the difference.
- 32. *leet*, left.
- 33. *seynt Poulés*, St. Paul's, the famous church in London.
- 34. *chaunterie for soulés*. A chantry is an endowment for the payment of a priest to sing masses for the repose of the souls of the donors. Lazy priests in the country sometimes sub-let their benefices and ran off to London to look for an easy job of this sort.
- 35. Or to join an order of monks and live an easier life.
- 40. *despitous*, merciless.
- 41. Not domineering or proud in his language.
- 45. But if any person were obstinate.
- 47. *snibben*, reprove. — for the *nonés*, as the occasion required.
- 49. *wayted after*, looked for.
- 50. *spyced consciencé*, over-scrupulous conscience. The line does not mean that he was lacking in conscientious scruples about matters that were really important, but that he was a man of sound sense who did not strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.
- 51. *Cristés lore*, Christ's teaching.

OLD ENGLISH BALLADS

ROBIN HOOD'S DEATH AND BURIAL

Robin Hood is the ideal outlaw of English song and story. He appears as the champion of the poor despised English people against their Norman rulers. "Look ye do no farther harm," he tells his men, "nor any good yeoman that walks in the green wood, nor any knight or squire that will be a good comrade." But, he continues,

These bishops and these archbishops
Ye shall them beat and bind.

Yet Robin was not, as might be thought from these lines, an irreligious man. On the contrary, he was a most pious robber, hearing three

masses every day before dinner and worshipping the Virgin Mary with special devotion. For her sake he would never harm a woman, nor any company that a woman was in. There is a large cycle of ballads about Robin Hood and his men. The best of these, the *Little Gest* (short story), is too long to be included here; but the ballad of his death and burial gives a good idea of his character, especially of his generosity, and of his love, even in death, of the good greenwood.

LINE 1. Little John, Robin's most trusty follower, jokingly called Little John from his huge stature.

2. Down a down. This is the chorus which was sung by the entire company; the minstrel sang the ballad proper as a solo.

5. shot for many a pound. In order to keep in good practice, Robin Hood and his men used to have frequent shooting matches for prizes. In a fine old ballad called *Robin Hood and the Monk*, we hear how Little John won five shillings of Robin at shooting, and how in consequence a quarrel arose that almost dissolved their long friendship.

9. cousin. In most of the ballads this cousin is described as the prioress of a nunnery. She seems to have hated Robin because he had often plundered churchmen.

11. Kirkley, the nunnery where Robin's cousin lived.

16. the ring, the knocker of the door.

48. dri'e, drive, hurry.

73. gravel and green, earth covered with green sod.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE

There are several versions of this ballad. The one here chosen is that given by Scott in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. It gives the Scottish version of one of the most famous raids that occurred during the long Border warfare between the Scotch and the English. In 1388 James, Earl of Douglas, invaded England at the head of three thousand men. He penetrated as far as Newcastle, where Hotspur, the most famous chief-tain of the great house of Percy, lay in garrison. In a skirmish before the walls, Douglas met Hotspur hand to hand and wrested from him his lance and pennon. These he vowed to carry to Scotland and plant upon the walls of his castle. "That," said Percy, "shalt thou never!" Accordingly Hotspur collected an army equal or superior in numbers to that of Douglas, and fell by night upon the Scotch camp at Otterbourne. The fight which followed was marked even in that age of battles by the fury with which it was contested. Douglas charged

almost alone into the midst of his foes and fell pierced by three mortal wounds. When his followers reached him he was dying, but he charged them to conceal his death, to defend his standard, and to avenge his fall. "It is an old prophecy," he said, "that a dead man shall win a battle, and I hope it will be accomplished this night." After a desperate struggle the Scotch won the fight, taking Hotspur and his brother prisoners, and driving the English from the dearly bought field. An English ballad represents the English as victors, but the Scottish version here given is truer to history.

LINE I. Lammas tide. Lammas, loaf mass, an old harvest festival once held on the first, now on the twelfth, of August.

3. doughty, the regular epithet for a Douglas in the old Scotch ballads. It means brave, hardy. — bound him, made himself ready.

5. the Gordons and the Graemes, two famous clans of the Scottish Border.

6. the Lindsays, a famous family in Scotland.

7. the Jardines, a clan of the West Border, at feud with the house of Douglas.

9. Tyne, a river in the northeast of England.

10. Bambrough, Bamborough, a little town in Northumberland.

11. Reidswire fells, a district in Northumberland near the Scottish Border.

13. Newcastle, the chief town of Northumberland.

24. The tane, one or the other.

33-36. These words are spoken by Douglas, who insinuates that Percy was rescued by the latter's men.

35. fell, hide, skin.

37-40. These lines are spoken by Percy.

40. fause, false.

41-52. These lines are spoken by Douglas.

47. kale, cabbage, or vegetables of any kind.

48. fend, support.

54. Our Ladye, the Virgin Mary.

58. bent, field.

60. pallions, pavilions.

61. a bonnie boy, a servant.

72. dight usually means to dress, to adorn; here, perhaps, to meet, to encounter.

74. Skye, an island northwest of Scotland.

82. fain, glad.

83. swakked, struck, the same word as 'swapped' in l. 119. — till sair they swat, till sorely they sweated.

94. recks, matters.

98. the three, the three divisions of the Scottish army.

99. braken, fern.

118. Each was glad to meet the other.

125. loun, common man.

KINMONT WILLIE

This ballad is founded upon a famous exploit of Sir Walter Scott of Branksome Castle, the Lord of Buccleuch. A dependent of Scott's, Willie Armstrong, commonly called Kinmont Willie, had been seized by an English deputy, Sakelde, on Scottish ground in time of peace. Finding that his complaints were ineffectual to obtain Willie's release, Buccleuch made a sudden raid across the Border, seized Carlisle Castle, where his retainer was confined, and carried him in triumph back to Scotland. Queen Elizabeth was very angry at this raid and demanded the exemplary punishment of Buccleuch, who, however, suffered only a brief imprisonment. According to an old family tradition, Buccleuch was later presented to Queen Elizabeth, who asked him how he had dared to undertake an enterprise so desperate and presumptuous. "What is it," answered Buccleuch boldly, "that a man dare not do?"

LINE 1. fause, false.

2. lord Scroope, the English warden, or keeper, of the Border, who imprisoned Willie after Sakelde had seized him.

4. Haribee, the place of execution at Carlisle, the chief city in north-west England.

12. Liddel-rack, a ford on the Liddel, a little stream flowing south-west from Scotland into England.

17-20. Kinmont Willie speaks to Lord Scroope.

21-24. Lord Scroope answers Willie.

21. haud, hold. — reiver, robber.

23. yate, gate.

28. lawing, bill.

29. bauld keeper, bold keeper. Buccleuch was the warden of the Scottish Border.

30. Branksome Ha', Branksome Hall, Buccleuch's castle.

33. He, Buccleuch. — ta'en, struck; literally, taken.

34. garr'd, made.

- 37. basnet, helmet. — curch, kerchief, veil.
- 40. lightly, scorn.
- 51. slight, raze.
- 53. lowe, flame.
- 54. sloken, quench.
- 61. marchmen, men of the marches, or borders.
- 62. ain name, own name, *i.e.*, of the clan of Scott.
- 63. Elliot. The Elliots were retainers of Buccleuch.
- 67. splent on spauld, armor on shoulder.
- 68. gleuves, gloves.
- 69-76. Buccleuch divides his men into four squads of ten each.
- 75. broken men, outlaws.
- 76. Woodhouselee, a house on the Border, belonging to Buccleuch.
- 77. Bateable land, a strip of country along the Border, inhabited mainly by outlaws

Who sought the beeves that made their broth
In England and in Scotland both.

It was called the Debatable Land, since both countries laid claim to it.

- 91. herry, plunder, rob. — corbie, crow.
- 92. wons, lives.
- 95. Dickie of Dryhope, a famous Scottish raider of that day.
- 96. lear, learning. Dickie apparently was readier with a blow than with a word.
- 98. Row-footed, rough-footed.
- 100. Sae, so.
- 102. the Eden, a river in the north of England, between Carlisle and the Border.
- 103. mickle of spait, at high flood.
- 106. hie, high.
- 108. nie, neigh.
- 118. the lead, the roof.
- 124. wha dare meddle wi' me, a famous Scotch Border tune, or slogan.
- 129. King James, the sixth of that name, afterwards James I of England.
- 132. sic a stear, such a stir, or panic.
- 133. coulter, plowshares, used to force open the doors.
- 141. saft, lightly.
- 142. fley'd, frightened.
- 144. speir, ask.
- 145. hente, caught.

- 146. starkest, strongest. — Teviotdale, a district of the Scotch Border.
- 147-152. Willie speaks these lines.
- 151. lodging maill, bill for lodging.
- 156. airns, irons, fetters.
- 158. wud, mad.
- 162. I have ridden a horse out over the furrows.
- 164. sic, such.
- 179. trew, trust.
- 182. maun, must.
- 184. Christentie, Christendom.

SIR PATRICK SPENS

Of the many versions of this fine old ballad, the one here given tells the story in the fullest detail. There does not seem to be any historical basis for the events related.

LINE 1. Dunfermline, one of the old royal towns of Scotland, situated on the Firth of Forth.

3. skeely, skillful.

9. a braid letter, a broad, or, as we say, a long letter.

16. maun, must.

23. this time of the year. It seems to have been late in the year, and an old Scotch law forbade sea voyages, at least for ships with valuable cargoes, between October 28 and February 2, on account of the stormy weather in the North Sea in winter.

29. hoysed, hoisted.

32. Wodensday, Wednesday. This day of the week is named for the old German god Woden.

38. fee, wealth, property.

39-44. Sir Patrick answers the inhospitable Norwegians.

42. gane, suffices.

43. a half-fou, a quart. — goud, gold.

45. Sir Patrick is so angry that he determines to leave Norway at once and orders his men to prepare for the voyage.

47-48. An old sailor answers Sir Patrick with a prophecy of bad weather.

47. alake, alack, alas.

49. yestreen, yesterday evening.

55. lift, sky.

56. gurly, grim, threatening.

57. lap, sprang out.

71. a bout, a bolt.

73. claith, cloth.

75. wap, wrap or lap. In one of Captain Cook's voyages a quilted sail was let down outside the ship to stop a leak that could not be reached from within.

81. laith, loath, reluctant.

82. shoon, shoes.

83-84. Long before the game was over (that is, before the ship sank) they wet the top of their hats.

86. flatter'd, fluttered, floated. — faem, foam.

98. goud kaims, gold combs.

101. Aberdeen, a town on the northeast coast of Scotland.

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

The scene of this ballad is laid by tradition in a wild and solitary glen near the little river Yarrow in Scotland. Here are still to be seen the ruins of a very ancient tower, one of the first possessions of the great house of Douglas. Seven stones are pointed out as marking the spot where the seven brothers were slain, and the Douglas burn, which flows through the glen to join the Yarrow, is said to be the stream at which the lovers stopped to drink. There are several ballads so like this in Danish that scholars think the story may have had a Scandinavian origin.

LINE I. Lady Douglas rouses her lord with the news of his daughter's flight.

4. under night, by night, secretly.

9. He, Lord William, who is carrying off Lady Margaret Douglas.

16. the lee, the lea, the meadow.

26. sair, sore, hard.

30. the holland, a kind of linen.

31. dighted, dressed.

34. gang or bide, go or stay.

65-66. Lord William dies of the wound he has concealed, and Lady Margaret of a broken heart.

69. St. Marie's kirk, St. Mary's church on St. Mary's Lake, not far from the supposed scene of the tragedy.

70. quire, the choir of the church, the part beyond the transepts.

73. plat, plaited, intertwined.

77. But bye and rade, but there rode by. — the Black Douglas, the head of the Douglas family. He was so angry at the elopement of Lady Margaret that he pulled up the brier that grew from her lover's grave.

78. wow, alas.

80. flang, flung. — Loch, lake.

THOMAS THE RYMER

This ballad celebrates one of the most famous characters in Scottish legend, Thomas of Ercildoune, generally called Thomas the Rymer, or True Thomas. According to the story, he was a famous poet and minstrel who was carried off by the Queen of the Fairies. He spent seven years in Fairyland and came back with the gift of prophecy. Many of his rhymes relating to the wars between England and Scotland, or prophesying future events, were current among the Scotch peasantry as late as Sir Walter Scott's day.

LINE 4. fernie brae, ferny hillside.

7. ilka tett, every lock.

17. Harp and carp, play and sing.

19. To kiss a fairy or spirit was said to put the daring mortal in the power of the supernatural being.

22. That fate shall never frighten me.

23. Syne, then.

24. the Eildon Tree, a haunted tree on the Eildon Hills, not far from the home of True Thomas near the Scottish Border.

42. To eat the fruit of Fairyland would make Thomas a prisoner of the fairies forever.

52. ferlies, wonders.

58. lillie leven, lawn of lilies.

67. gin, if.

69. even, smooth.

According to the old story, Thomas came back from Fairyland and was held in high honor by the Scottish lords. But he was bound to return to the Queen of the Fairies whenever she should call him. One day when he was feasting with his friends, a man came running in to announce that a milk-white hart and hind were slowly parading the village street. Thomas recognized this as a sign, and rising up from the feast, followed the animals to the forest, where he disappeared from mortal view. According to the legend, he is still in Fairyland and will one day revisit the upper earth.

EDMUND SPENSER

THE FAERIE QUEENE

The Faerie Queene, Spenser's longest and most famous poem, is both a romantic tale of knight-errantry and a moral allegory. "The general end of all the book," said Spenser, "is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline"; in other words, to hold up the mirror of true manhood to Elizabethan gentlemen among whom the poet moved. The poem was planned to consist of twelve books. In each of these a knight was to represent some virtue, such as Holiness, Temperance, or Courtesy, and was to go out on adventures and conquer the enemies of Virtue. Chief among these knights was Arthur, the famous hero of old British legend, who represents in Spenser's poem "the magnificence of the whole Virtue." Gloriana, the Fairy Queen, after whom the poem is named, represents the divine glory which every true knight is bound to seek and serve. At the close of the poem she was to be united in marriage to Prince Arthur.

Only half of *The Faerie Queene* was ever written, and even this half is too long for the patience of most readers. The story grows very confused at times; but it is full of beautiful passages, and no one who has read it to the end has ever thought his labor lost.

LINE I. pricking, riding.

8. jolly, gallant.

9. giusts, jousts, combats in the lists.

10. bloudie crosse. This gentle knight with the bloody cross on his breast is generally spoken of as the Red Cross Knight. He is the Knight of Holiness, and stands for the pattern Englishman, the Christian knight. It is his purpose in life to fight sin in all its shapes and forms.

13. The line seems to mean 'He always adored his Lord, who, although dead, ever liveth.'

17. His looks were too grave and serious.

18. ydrad, dreaded.

19. bond, bound.

22. worship, knightly honor.

24. earne, yearn.

27. his foe, a dragon, the Devil.

28. A lovely ladie, Una, who stands for Truth; and also for the Protestant church.

31. Her veil was wimpled, or folded, low so as to hide her face.
 32. black stole, a black hood, such as nuns wear.
 56. A shadie grove, the Wood of Error, into which the Red Cross Knight and Una were driven by a storm. Later in the story, they find the Cave of Error, and the Knight rushes in and slays the monster.
 68. can is used here for gan or began.
 69. sayling pine. Pine is used partly in the construction of sailing vessels.
 70. the poplar never dry. The poplar flourishes in damp spots.
 71. The builder oake. Oak is used, of course, for all sorts of building purposes.
 72. the cypresse funerall. Cypress in old days was frequently used in decorating graves.
 78. weene, think.
 79. doubt, fear.

CHASE AFTER LOVE

This extract is taken from *The Shepheardes Calendar*, which was Spenser's earliest work of note. *The Shepheardes Calendar* is a pastoral poem, dealing with the delights and sorrows of rustic life. It is divided into twelve parts, one for each month of the year. Spenser and his friends, under rustic names, are the chief characters in the poem. In the selection here printed, two shepherd boys, Willie and Thomalin, are the speakers.

LINE 2. han, have.

3. cast, decided.
 6. tooting, looking about, searching.
 7. todde, a thick bush.
 8. the little God, Cupid, the god of love.
 13. Tho, then.
 14. some quicke, some live thing.
 17. earnd, yearned, desired.
 19. swayne, a boy.
 22. gylden, golden.
 29. Tho pumie stones I hastily hent, then pumice stones I hastily seized. Pumice is volcanic lava and is very light and porous.
 31. so wimble and so wight, so nimble and so active.
 33. latched, caught.
 35. earst, at first.

- 38. For then, at that time.
- 42. Ne wote, nor know.
- 44. Perdie, a common oath, which meant little more than assuredly or certainly.
- 48. wroken, avenged.
- 54. Else he would have been sorely frightened.
- 55. Welkin, the sky.
- 56. Phebus, the sun. The line means that the sinking sun was burying itself in the clouds.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

This is a song by Amiens, one of the banished gentlemen in *As You Like It*.

LINE 3. turn his merry note, shape his song to the music of the bird.

BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND

This is the second song of Amiens.

LINE 12. bite so nigh, bite so deep.

14. warp, freeze.

16. As friend remembered not, as forgotten friendship.

FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT O' THE SUN

This is the dirge sung by two young princes in *Cymbeline* over the body of Fidele, their page, who is really their sister, Imogen, in disguise.

LINE 11. sceptre, learning, physic, kings, scholars, doctors.

14. thunder-stone, the thunderbolt.

18. Consign to thee, agree with thee in dying, join thee in death.

19. exorciser, a magician who could call the dead from their graves.

21. unlaïd. A ghost was said to be 'laid' when it was prevented from wandering and put to rest by prayers or charms.

23. consummation, ending, rest.

HARK! HARK! THE LARK

This morning song is also from *Cymbeline*. It is sung under the window of Imogen, the heroine of the play.

LINE 2. **Phœbus**, the sun.

5. **Mary-buds**, marigolds.

ARIEL'S SONGS

I

This song and the two following are sung by Ariel, the fairy servant of the enchanter Prospero, in *The Tempest*.

LINE 4. **whist**, being hushed or stilled.

5. **Foot it featly**, dance daintily.

6. **the burden bear**, sing the chorus.

II

LINE 1. **Full fathom five**, five fathoms deep. — **thy father**, Alonzo, King of Naples, father of Prince Ferdinand, to whom Ariel is singing. Alonzo and Ferdinand had both been shipwrecked, and the prince thought that his father was drowned.

III

Ariel has received from Prospero a promise of freedom from all service. He sings this song rejoicing in his prospect of liberty.

LINE 5. **After summer**. Ariel will fly upon a bat's back after the departing summer.

SONNETS

XXIX

LINE 2. **my outcast state**. There is, perhaps, a reference in this phrase to Shakespeare's position as an actor. In his time actors, unless under the patronage of some nobleman, were classed by the law with sturdy rogues and vagabonds, and were heartily despised by the sober citizens to whose class Shakespeare by birth belonged.

6. **Featur'd like him**, possessing his personal beauty. — **with friends possess'd**, possessing friends.

7. **scope**, breadth of mind.

10. **my state**, my position in life.

LXXIII

This sonnet is one of a number in which Shakespeare laments his advancing age, and contrasts it with the youth and beauty of his noble friend. We do not know exactly when the Sonnets were written, but Shakespeare could not have been over thirty-seven years of age at most. But men lived faster in those days than now, and no doubt Shakespeare, who ended his active life before the age of fifty, felt himself very old in comparison with his young friend.

LINE 4. *choirs*. Shakespeare is thinking of some of the ruined abbeys of England, with their roofless arches and broken windows. The choir is the part of a church where the singers are placed.

14. To love that well, to love me well, because I cannot stay long with you.

CVI

LINE 1. the chronicle of wasted time, the history of the past.

2. *wights*, mortals.

5. *blazon*, a term of heraldry, here equivalent to a poetic description.

7. *their antique pen*, the pen of the old poets.

8. *you master*, you are possessed of.

11-14. Since the old poets never saw your beauty, they were unable to celebrate it as it deserves. Even we who see it and wonder at it cannot praise it properly.

11. *divining eyes*, prophetic eyes.

CXVI

This sonnet is one of the noblest of the series. It shows Shakespeare's idea of true love, or perfect friendship, unalterable and steadfastly enduring.

LINE 1. the marriage, the perfect union.

2. Admit impediments, admit that there can be hindrances.

4. with the remover to remove, true love does not falter even when the person who is loved withdraws his affection.

8. Whose influence on men's lives is unknown, although astronomers may calculate its distance from the earth. The reference is to astrology, the science which taught that men's lives were influenced by the stars.

9. *Time's fool*, the mock or sport of Time.

10. his bending sickle's compass, the sweep of the curved scythe with which Time cuts down earthly beauty.

12. the edge of doom, the judgment day, or the end of all things.

AN ELIZABETHAN MISCELLANY

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

Sidney is one of the most brilliant and attractive figures of the reign of Elizabeth. Although he died at the age of thirty-two, he was already famous as a soldier, a statesman, a poet, a novelist, and the pattern of all knightly virtues, or, as his friend Spenser called him, "the president of noblesse and of chevalree."

MY TRUE LOVE HATH MY HEART

Most of Sidney's poetry is elaborate and somewhat artificial; but the little ditty here given is simplicity itself.

THOMAS LODGE (1556(?) - 1625)

Lodge was one of the band of scholar poets, playwrights, and pamphleteers who were prominent in London just before Shakespeare. This song is taken from his prose tale, *Rosalind*, a story which furnished Shakespeare with the plot of *As You Like It*. It was written to beguile the tedium of a voyage to the Canary Islands.

ROSALIND'S MADRIGAL

A madrigal is a short love song written for music.

LINE 9. wanton, rogue, used in playful sense.

15. if so, if.

18. Whist, be quiet.

34. I like of thee, I delight in thee.

THOMAS NASH (1567-1601)

Nash was one of the group of gentlemen poets and prose writers already mentioned. He was a friend of Marlowe and of Greene; Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, was also a benefactor of Nash.

The song printed here is taken from a masque called *Summer's Last Will and Testament*. "Very vividly," says Mr. Bullen, "does Nash depict the feeling of forlorn hopelessness caused by the dolorous advent of the dreaded pestilence." There was a fearful outbreak of the plague in London in the very year in which this song was written. Nash must have seen many a house marked with the red cross and the pitiful words, "Lord, have mercy on us!"

IN TIME OF PESTILENCE

LINE 3. Fond, foolish.

4. toys, trifles.

10. Physic, a personification of the skill and wisdom of doctors.

19. Helen, the famous beauty for whose sake Troy was besieged by the Greeks.

23. Hector, the bravest of the Trojan heroes.

25. her gate, the grave.

26. the bells, either the church bells, tolling for funerals, or those rung by the drivers of the death carts, who in the time of pestilence went from door to door of the infected houses, calling, "Bring out your dead!"

29. Wit, genius. — wantonness, sprightliness.

31. Hell's executioner, the plague.

33. vain art, the fruitless skill of the physician.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593)

Marlowe, the most famous of the English dramatists before Shakespeare, has left behind him only this specimen of his genius as a lyric poet. This song was very popular in its day; Sir Walter Raleigh wrote a graceful reply to it; Shakespeare quotes it in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*; Izaak Walton puts it in the mouth of his pretty milkmaid in the *Complete Angler*; and it was imitated by Herrick, the chief of the Cavalier poets.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

LINE 4. yields. This use of a singular verb with one or more subjects in the plural was not considered incorrect in Shakespeare's day.

11. kirtle, a woman's outer garment.

19. An if, if.

21. shepherd-swains, shepherd boys.

THOMAS DEKKER (1575 (?)–1640 (?))

Dekker was a very busy playwright and pamphleteer in London in Shakespeare's day and for many years after Shakespeare's death. The verses printed here are from a play called *The Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissell*.

O SWEET CONTENT

LINE 6. golden numbers, golden coins.

8. crispéd, rippling.

17. This line is a burden, or refrain, such as appears in many songs of that time.

BEN JONSON (1573–1637)

Jonson was the great scholar poet and playwright of the age of Shakespeare. He never attained the general popularity of the great dramatist, and for very good reasons; but he was for many years more admired than Shakespeare by critics of the drama. For twenty years after Shakespeare's death he was the acknowledged head of English letters, and an object almost of veneration to a group of young writers who were proud to boast themselves "of the tribe of Ben." Jonson's lyric poems are sometimes overloaded with his weight of learning, but at his best he is faultlessly polished and very charming.

STILL TO BE NEAT

This is a song in one of Jonson's best plays, *Epicæne; or, the Silent Woman*.

LINE 6. sound, wholesome, genuine.

11. the adulteries of art, the dishonest tricks of art as opposed to nature.

TO CELIA

This is one of the best known songs in the English language and one of the loveliest. It has been sung almost without intermission since Shakespeare's day.

LINE 7. nectar, the drink of the gods.

THOMAS HEYWOOD (1575(?)-1650(?))

Heywood was one of the most prolific playwrights of his time. Of the songs scattered through his plays, the one here printed is perhaps the best.

GOOD MORROW

LINE 16. **Stare**, starling.

17. **elves**, used here as a pet name for the birds.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625) are always spoken of together. For years they lived in the same house and wrote plays in unison. Even those which were written by Fletcher after his friend's death, alone or in partnership with other dramatists, were published under the names of both. Of the two poems here printed the first is certainly by Beaumont.

LINES ON THE TOMBS IN WESTMINSTER

The great abbey of Westminster, begun by Edward the Confessor in the tenth century, and finished in the early part of the eighteenth century, is the most famous church in England. Since the time of Harold it has been the coronation church of English sovereigns, and many of the most famous Englishmen are buried there. Chaucer, Spenser, Beaumont himself, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Addison, Dickens, Tennyson, and Browning are among the men of letters who lie in the Poets' Corner of the abbey.

LINE 3. **how many royal bones**. Among other English monarchs, Edward the Confessor, Edward III, Henry V, Henry VII, and Queen Elizabeth are buried in Westminster Abbey.

5. The relative pronoun 'who' is understood as the subject of "had."

13. **bones of birth**, bodies of men of high birth.

ROSES, THEIR SHARP SPINES BEING GONE

This beautiful song in honor of the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta opens the play of the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, a drama which is thought to be the joint work of Shakespeare and Fletcher. It is not

quite certain which of them wrote this song, but the weight of authority inclines to assign it to Fletcher.

LINE 5. **quaint**, dainty.

7. **Ver**, the Spring.

9. **bells**, blossoms.

10. **Oxlips**, a popular name for the greater cowslip. It seems to grow out of a cradle of leaves.

11. **death-beds**. The marigold seems to have been a favorite flower to strew on coffins or to plant on graves. — **blowing**, blooming.

12. **Lark's-heels**, a kind of nasturtium, or else the larkspur.

13. **Nature's children**, flowers.

15. **their sense**, their senses of sight and smell.

16. **angel**, here used for bird.

19-21. The birds named in these lines are all birds of ill omen.

22. **bride-house**, the house in which the bridal feast was held.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)

Drayton was one of the most voluminous poets of Shakespeare's time. His longer poems are little read now, but he is still famous as the author of the two poems printed here. Of his *Ballad of Agincourt*, Lowell says, "it runs, it leaps, clashing its verses like swords upon bucklers, and moves the pulse to a charge." Rossetti, himself one of the greatest of English sonnet writers, called the famous sonnet "one of the best in the language, if not quite."

TO THE CAMBRO-BRITONS AND THEIR HARP, HIS BALLAD OF AGINCOURT

The Cambro-Britons were the Welsh. Henry V, the hero of Agincourt, was born at Monmouth, on the border of Wales, and the Welsh claimed him as their countryman.

The battle of Agincourt (1415), one of the most famous of English victories, was gained by Henry V over a French army of vastly superior numbers. The victory was mainly due to the splendid English archery and to the recklessness and disorder of the French.

LINE 2. **advance**, hoist.

6. **Caux**, a village at the mouth of the Seine, the chief river of northern France.

17. **Which**, who. It refers to "the French gen'ral" in line 15.

- 21. Which, which order.
- 28. amazed, dazed with fear.
- 34. rest, resolution.
- 40. redeem, ransom.
- 41. Poitiers and Cressy, two great victories gained over the French by Edward III of England and his son, the Black Prince, in the century preceding the battle of Agincourt.
- 45. our grandsire-great. Edward III was Henry's great-grandfather.
- 46. the regal seat, the throne of France, claimed by Edward III.
- 48. the French lilies, the fleur-de-lis, the emblem of the French monarchy.
- 49. The Duke of York, King Henry's cousin, who fell in the battle.
- 50. vaward, vanguard.
- 51. the main, the chief division of the army.
- 53. Exeter, an English nobleman.
- 66. Erpingham, Sir Thomas Erpingham, a white-haired veteran, the commander of the English archery.
- 73. Spanish yew, the favorite wood for bows.
- 74. a cloth yard long, twenty-seven inches, an old measure for cloth. This was the regulation length of arrows for the longbow.
- 81-88. After the first charge of the French horsemen was stopped by the hail of English arrows, they attempted to retreat. In doing so they fell into inextricable confusion, and the English archers threw down their bows, charged on them with swords and axes, and killed them like sheep.
- 82. bilbos, swords.
- 87. peasants, here used as a term of derision. Many of the French slain at Agincourt were nobles or gentlemen.
- 89-96. After the fight between the archers and the French cavalry, there was a short but fierce struggle between the main army under Henry and a French division that attempted by a desperate charge to retrieve the day. In this combat Henry fought in the front rank and distinguished himself by his personal bravery. He was beaten to his knees by a blow from a French sword, which cleft the crown on his helmet, but he escaped without a wound.
- 91. ding, beat.
- 94. besprent, sprinkled.
- 97, 101. Gloucester, Clarence, two brothers of King Henry, who distinguished themselves in the fight.
- 102. a maiden knight, an untried soldier.
- 105-112. The names in these lines are those of English nobles who fought at Agincourt. Suffolk was killed there.

111. doughtily, bravely.

113. Saint Crispin's day. The battle of Agincourt was fought on October 25, the day of St. Crispin, an early Christian martyr.

118. fill a pen, inspire a writer.

SONNET LXI

This sonnet was probably written by Drayton to his sweetheart, Anne Goodeere.

JOHN MILTON

L'ALLEGRO

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso* are, in all probability, the fruit of Milton's first year of seclusion and study at Horton. The two poems are companion pieces. They contrast the pleasures of mirth and melancholy. By mirth is meant, not unrestrained gayety, much less licentious pleasure, but that sunny, happy temper which goes easily through life, looking only on the brighter side, and culling pleasures everywhere. Melancholy, on the other hand, means with Milton the grave, reflective, studious temper, which shuns the action of the world and finds its joy in books and meditation. But it is not a gloomy or bitter mood. On the contrary, it offers rare pleasures, and it must have been very much like the prevailing temper of Milton's own mind during his years at Horton. The other mood, perhaps, represents the brighter, gayer temper which broke out on his rare visits to London, or his few idle days spent in wandering through the pleasant English fields along the Thames.

It is no unlikely fancy that Milton set before himself in these poems two types of contemporary life between which he was later to make absolute choice. *L'Allegro* represents in effect the Cavalier spirit, light-hearted, careless, and pleasure loving, while *Il Penseroso* represents the best type of the Puritan, studious, thoughtful, and devout.

L'Allegro. *Allegro* is an Italian word meaning brisk, merry, lively. *L'Allegro* here denotes the cheerful man.

LINE 2. *Cerberus*, the three-headed dog of Greek mythology that guarded the gate of Hades. Melancholy is here represented as the child of Cerberus and Midnight. This means that the cheerful man thinks of Melancholy as something infernal and gloomy.

3. **Stygian cave**, a cave on the banks of the river Styx, which formed the boundary line between the upper world and Hades.

5. **uncouth**, unknown, strange.

10. **Cimmerian**. The Cimmerians were a mythical people mentioned in the *Odyssey* who lived in perpetual darkness.

12. **Euphrosyne**, Joy, one of the Three Graces of Greek mythology. They are usually represented as the daughters of Jupiter. This account of their parentage is found in the best known of the classical commentators on Virgil, frequently printed in old editions of Virgil. Milton must have read it in school or college.

16. **ivy-crowned**. Bacchus, the god of wine, is often spoken of by classical poets as crowned with ivy.

17. **some sager, some wiser poets**. Milton does not approve of making Mirth the child of Love and Wine, and suggests another parentage which makes her the daughter of the West Wind and the Morning. In other words, Mirth comes from "the early freshness of the summer morning." This is Milton's own invention disguised by the reference to "some sager" poets.

19. **Zephyr**, the west wind. — **Aurora**, the dawn.

20. **a-Maying**, gathering flowers to celebrate May Day, — an old custom referred to by Chaucer, and also by many poets of Milton's day. It still survives in some parts of Germany. See Herrick's poem, *Corinna's going a-Maying*, p. 82.

24. **buxom**, lively, brisk.

25. **nymph**, Mirth.

29. **Hebe**, the cupbearer of the gods; she was also the goddess of eternal youth.

36. **The mountain-nymph**. Liberty, perhaps, is called a mountain nymph because mountaineers have as a rule been more successful than lowlanders in preserving their independence.

41. **the lark**, the English skylark, that sings at dawn.

43. **his watch-tower**. The point to which the lark soars, and from which it sees the rising sun, is here likened to a watchtower.

45. **in spite of sorrow**, in defiance of sorrow.

48. **eglantine**, the sweetbrier. Perhaps by "twisted eglantine" Milton meant the honeysuckle.

60. **his state**, his stately progress.

62. **liveries**, suits, as a servant's livery. — **dight**, dressed.

67. **tells his tale**, counts the number of his sheep.

69. **Straight**, straightway.

70. **landskip**, an old form for landscape.

74. labouring, slowly moving.

75. pied, variegated. The word comes from 'pie,' the black and white bird commonly called the magpie.

77. Towers and battlements. Perhaps Milton was thinking of the towers of Windsor Castle, which is near Horton.

79. lies, dwells.

80. cynosure, literally, the dog's tail, a name given in early times to the constellation of Ursa Minor, which contains the pole-star. By this sailors used to steer their course, and so the word came to mean, first, a guiding star, and then, any object on which attention is fixed. Here it is used of a beautiful lady who draws all eyes to her.

83. Corydon and Thyrsis, names commonly given by classical poets to country laborers. So is *Thestylis*, l. 88.

85. messes, dishes.

86. Phillis, a girl's name, borrowed from the classical poets.

91. secure, free from trouble.

94. rebecks, old-fashioned fiddles, with two or three strings.

100. spicy nut-brown ale. People used to put nutmeg and other spices in ale and wine.

102. Faery Mab. Mab is the Queen of the Fairies. She had a special oversight of households, and punished slovenly and careless maids by eating up their cakes and cream, or pinching them in their sleep. She used to drop a coin in the shoes of those who pleased her. — *junkets*, dainties.

103. She. A girl in the company telling stories by the fire relates how she had been "pinched and pulled" by Queen Mab and her fairies.

104. he. A man in the company, who had been misled by the friar's lantern, tells a tale about the "drudging goblin." — *Friar's lantern*. There was a spirit called Friar Rush, who haunted houses, and another, Jack of the Lantern, or Will of the Wisp, who danced about the marshes. Milton seems to have confused the two; or he may refer to Puck, who is sometimes called Friar, and who delighted to mislead travelers by showing a false light.

105. the drudging goblin, Robin Goodfellow, a household spirit who, if propitiated with food and drink, would work for the master of the house. If, however, he was spied upon or failed to receive his bowl of cream, he became tricky and malicious.

110. lubber, awkward. — *fiend*, not devil, but fairy or goblin.

111. the chimney, here the hearth.

113. **crop-full.** After having filled his stomach he flings himself out of doors.

114. **the first cock.** The cockcrow was the signal for ghosts and spirits of the night to fly away. — **matin**, morning note.

117. The scene changes to the city and its pleasures.

120. **weeds, clothes, garments.** — **triumphs, tournaments, or pageants.**

122. **Rain influence,** pour down encouragement on the knights and urge them to brave deeds. The word "influence" was originally used to denote the power which the stars were once believed to exert over the characters and destinies of men.

123. **both, wit and arms, poet and warrior.**

125. **Hymen, the god of marriage.** In a masque of Jonson's he appears in a saffron-colored robe, his head crowned with roses and marjoram, in his right hand a pine-tree torch. In these lines Milton is describing a masque, that is, a dramatic entertainment combining music and dancing with gorgeous costumes and elaborate scenery, such as was frequently given at court on the marriage of some prince or royal favorite.

132. **Jonson.** Ben Jonson, Shakespeare's contemporary and friend, was the most learned of Elizabethan poets. His best works are his comedies. These are alluded to by the word "sock," which means the low-heeled slipper worn by comic actors, as opposed to the buskin, or high boot, worn by tragedians. See *Il Penseroso*, l. 102.

133. **Fancy's child, the child of Imagination.**

136. **Lap, wrap, fold.** — **Lydian airs, soft, languishing music,** such as was played by the luxurious Lydians of Asia Minor.

138. **meeting soul, the soul that meets, or hears, this music.**

139. **bout, turn, or trill, of notes.**

141. **wanton heed and giddy cunning.** This phrase refers to the seemingly careless but really artful turns and runs of the music.

143-144. The voice running through the mazes of the song is supposed to set free the harmony that is hidden and enchained in the notes.

145. **Orpheus, a famous poet and harper of Greek mythology.** When his wife, Eurydice, died, he descended into Hades after her, and by the power of his music won her back from Pluto, but only on condition that he should not look upon her before they had passed the gates of Hades. He broke this condition and lost Eurydice forever. This story is again referred to in *Il Penseroso*, ll. 105-108.

147. **Elysian, heavenly.** Elysium was the heaven of Greek mythology.

149. **Pluto, the god of Hades, the abode of the dead.**

IL PENSEROSO

Penseroso is an old Italian word meaning 'musing,' 'meditative.' *Il Penseroso* is, accordingly, the sober and meditative, as distinguished from *L'Allegro*, the gay, light-hearted man.

LINE I. Hence, vain deluding Joys. The first ten lines of *Il Penseroso* correspond to the ten-line introduction to *L'Allegro*. In them the poet banishes, as it were, the spirit of idle pleasure, which is the opposite of the pensive mood he intends to depict in the rest of the poem. Joys are called the children of Folly, without a father, to show that they spring from Folly alone, and do not have their source in anything higher or better.

3. bested, help or profit.

4. toys, trifles.

6. fancies fond, foolish imaginations.

10. pensioners, attendants. Milton is thinking of the attendants, or bodyguard, of a king, who were called 'pensioners' in that day.—*Morpheus*, the Greek god of sleep.

14. hit, suit, or agree with. In other words, the real countenance of Melancholy is too bright for mortals to gaze upon, and so is "o'erlaid with black."

17. in esteem, in men's opinion.

18. Memnon, an Ethiopian prince, remarkable for his personal beauty, who was slain by Achilles at the siege of Troy. Milton thinks of Melancholy as dark, but beautiful enough to be Memnon's sister.

19. starred Ethiop queen, Cassiopea, a queen in Greek mythology, who boasted that her daughter Andromeda was fairer than the sea nymphs. Milton makes her boast of her own beauty. She is called "starred" because after her death she was placed among the stars. Cassiopea's Chair is a constellation recognized to-day in star maps.

23. Vesta, the Roman goddess of the hearth and the sacred fire, which was always tended by pure virgins.

24. Saturn, the father of Jupiter, driven by his son from his throne in the heavens. Milton invents a parentage for Melancholy in this poem as he did for Mirth in *L'Allegro*. By making her the child of Saturn and Vesta, he means that the sober, pensive mood which he calls Melancholy comes from solitude and purity.

25. in Saturn's reign, before Saturn was dethroned by Jupiter, *i.e.*, in the most ancient times.

29. *Ida*, the name of a mountain range in Crete, an island supposed to be haunted by Saturn.

31. *pensive Nun*, Melancholy.

32. *demure*, of good manners and morals.

33. *grain*, dye or hue. The color referred to by Milton was deep purple.

35. *stole*. The word sometimes means a long, flowing garment, but it can also mean a hood or veil, and probably does so here. — *cypress*, a word commonly used in Milton's time to denote black crape. The word comes from the island of Cyprus, whence this material was first introduced into England. — *lawn*, thin, fine cambric. Milton imagines Melancholy as clad in a flowing robe of dark purple, with a veil of black crape thrown around her head and shoulders.

36. *decent*. The word is here used in its Latin sense, meaning 'graceful' or 'becoming.'

37. *state*, stately manner, dignity. Contrast the approach of Melancholy "in her wonted state" with that of Mirth, dancing along with her gay companions.

39. *commercing*, holding intercourse, communing. Note that the word is accented on the second syllable.

41. *passion*, emotion.

42. *Forget thyself to marble*, lose thyself in meditation till thou seemest as motionless as a statue.

43. *sad*, serious. — *cast*, turn of the eyes.

44. *as fast*, as steadfastly. Melancholy does not let her eyes wander; she either fixes them on heaven in rapt contemplation, or on the earth in solemn thought.

46. *Fast*, fasting personified. Milton is probably thinking of his own abstemious habits. — *diet*, dine. The idea is that the pensive man, while fasting in body, may be in mind feasting with the gods.

47. *the Muses*, the Greek goddesses of art and poetry.

53. *the fiery-wheeléd throne*, the chariot of God as seen in a vision by Ezekiel (Ezekiel x), each wheel of which was a cherub. Milton names one of the cherubs Contemplation, that is, the habit of meditation on the highest and holiest themes.

55. *hist along*. "Hist" is here a verb meaning 'to call quietly, in a whisper.' Contrast the followers of Melancholy, Peace, Quiet, Fasting, Leisure, Holy Meditation, and Silence, with the companions of Mirth (*L'Allegro*, ll 25-36).

56. *Philomel*, a lady in Greek mythology who was changed into a nightingale. The word is often used in poetry for this bird. — *deign a song*, condescend to sing.

57. **plight**, mood, strain.

59. **Cynthia**, one of the many names of Diana, the goddess of the moon. Milton imagines her chariot as drawn by dragons.

60. **the accustomed oak**, the tree in which the nightingale was accustomed to sing. Milton was probably thinking of some particular tree near his home which was haunted by nightingales.

65. **unseen**. Milton, in his character of *Il Penseroso*, imagines himself as walking apart from the sight of men. Compare the habit of the gay *L'Allegro*, "sometime walking *not unseen*."

68. **highest noon**, highest place in the sky, the place the sun occupies at noon.

73. **plat**, plot, a small piece of ground.

74. **curfew**, the bell rung at eight or nine o'clock at night as a signal to put out all lights. It is derived from the French *couvrir*, to cover, and *feu*, the fire.

77. **the air**, the weather.

78. **will fit**, will suit the mood of pensive thought.

80. **to counterfeit a gloom**. The light of the embers is only sufficient to show the darkness of the room.

83. **the bellman**, the night watchman who went through the streets ringing a bell and calling out the hours of the night. He used to sing a little verse for each hour, and this is the "drowsy charm" of the poem. In it he invoked God's blessing on the houses against the perils of the night.

87. **outwatch the Bear**. The constellation of the Bear (also called Charles's Wain, or, in this country, the Dipper) never sets below the horizon. To outwatch it a man must sit up till it fades at dawn. We know that Milton often spent whole nights in study.

88. **thrice great Hermes**. A number of philosophical works treating of God and the nature of the soul, were supposed to have been written, or inspired, by an Egyptian god whom the Greeks identified with Hermes, which is the Greek name for Mercury. "Thrice great" is Milton's translation of "*Trismegistus*," a title applied by old writers to this god. Milton fancies himself spending the night in the study of these books.

88-89. **unsphere the spirit of Plato**, call back, by reading and communing with his works, the soul of Plato, the great Greek philosopher, from the sphere, or heaven, in which it was dwelling.

93. **of those demons**. The construction is somewhat obscure, but the phrase probably depends upon some verb like 'tell,' to be supplied from "unfold," in line 89. "Demons" here means not 'devils,' but 'spirits.'

Old writers believed that a peculiar sort of spirit dwelt in each element: sylphs in the air, nymphs in the water, gnomes in the earth, and salamanders in the fire. The powers of these spirits were supposed to be in harmony, "a true consent," with those of the planets and the four elements. The old science of astrology, still held true by many men in Milton's day, taught that the characters of men and the events of their lives were determined by the position of the planets at the hour when they were born.

98. *sceptred pall, royal robe.*

99-100. In these two lines Milton is thinking of the great plays of the old Greek dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. These were very often about Œdipus, king of Thebes, an old Greek city, and his children; or about the descendants of Pelops, an old Greek hero, the ancestor of Agamemnon and Menelaus; or about the men and women who were concerned with the famous siege of Troy. Milton preferred these classical tragedies to the plays of later dramatists, as may be seen from the phrase "though rare" in l. 101. When he speaks of works of "the later age," he may be thinking of Shakespeare and Jonson.

102. *buskined stage.* The buskin was a high-heeled boot worn by the actors in the old Greek tragedies. The phrase here stands for tragedy in general.

103. *sad Virgin, Melancholy.*

104. *Musæus*, a mythical Greek poet to whom many sacred hymns were ascribed.

105. *Orpheus*, see note on *L'Allegro*, l. 145.

109. *him, Chaucer.* In the *Squire's Tale* Chaucer began and "left half-told" a story about Cambuscan, or, as he calls him, Cambinskan. The name is a corruption of Genghis Khan, the great Tartar conqueror. According to Chaucer, Cambinskan had two sons, Camball and Algar-sife, and a daughter Canacé. He received as presents from the king of Arabia and India a magic horse which could fly through the air, a ring which gave its wearer the power of understanding the speech of birds, and a mirror which revealed coming danger, or the treachery of friends or lovers.

113. *virtuous, endowed with magic powers.*

116. *great bards.* Milton is thinking of the romantic Italian poets, Ariosto and Tasso, and also of his favorite poet, Spenser, whose *Faerie Queene* tells of "turneys, trophies, and enchantments," but in its allegory contains far more than meets the ear of a careless reader.

122. civil-suited, dressed like a sober citizen. In *L'Allegro* the day dawns with a splendid sunrise "robed in flames and amber light." This is too bright for the mood of *Il Penseroso*. — **Morn**, here personified as the goddess of morning, Aurora.

123. tricked, decked, adorned. — frounced, with curled and frizzled hair.

124. the Attic boy, Cephalus, a young hunter loved by the goddess of the dawn.

125. kerchieft, veiled. — comely, becoming.

130. minute-drops, drops falling every minute. Thus we speak of minute guns.

132. Goddess, Melancholy.

134. Sylvan, the god of forests.

135. monumental, either in the sense of 'memorial,' telling of past years, because oaks live to a great age, or because it was used for buildings and carvings.

136. heavéd, uplifted.

137. nymphs, the wood spirits.

140. profane, unsympathetic. *Il Penseroso* desires to be hidden from the profane, that is, the common throng.

141. garish, glaring.

145. consort, harmony.

146. dewy-feathered. The god of sleep was supposed to have wings dripping with the dews of slumber.

147-150. The meaning of this passage seems to be: 'Let some dream flutter at the wings of Sleep, in a stream of lifelike images laid softly on my eyelids.' The dream is personified as hovering at the wings of Morpheus and pouring down a stream of visions upon the sleeping *Penseroso*.

151. breathe, a verb in the infinitive mood, depending on "let," line 147.

154. Genius, guardian spirit.

155. due feet, feet which are due at, bound to visit, the studious cloister.

156. pale, the inclosure.

157. embowéd, arched.

158. massy-proof, massively strong.

159. storied windows, stained-glass windows with stories from the Bible or from the lives of the saints. — dight, decked, referring to the rich color of the windows.

170. spell, study.

SONNETS

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

Milton's twenty-third birthday occurred during the last year that he spent at Cambridge. He had by this time given up all idea of entering the ministry, and a friend ventured to remonstrate with him on letting his youth go by without settling definitely upon some profession, or producing some fruit of his studies. Milton's answer was accompanied by this sonnet, one of the noblest pieces of self-defense in the English language.

LINE 4. *shew'th*, old form for 'showeth.'

5-6. 'Perhaps I look younger than I really am.' Milton was always a little vain, not unnaturally, of his beauty and youthful appearance.

8. *timely-happy spirits*, men who had reached an earlier intellectual development, "inward ripeness."—*endu'th*, old form for 'endoweth.'

9. *it*, my "inward ripeness."

10-11. *even to that same lot*, strictly proportioned to the destiny assigned me by heaven.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

This sonnet was written in 1655. In April of that year the Waldenses, a poor and pious people inhabiting certain valleys in Piedmont, in the north of Italy, were ordered by their ruler, the Duke of Savoy, to renounce their simple form of worship and to become Roman Catholics. Their refusal was followed by a frightful massacre. When the news reached England, at that time the champion of the Protestant cause, the nation was stirred to fierce anger. Cromwell threatened the duke with war, and finally succeeded in obtaining permission for the remaining Waldenses to live in peace and to worship God in their own way. Milton, as Latin secretary, wrote the official letters for Cromwell to the Duke of Savoy, and this sonnet is the expression of his personal feeling.

LINE 4. *our fathers*. At a time when all the English were Roman Catholics, and so, according to Milton, little better than idolaters, the Waldenses preserved the pure form of early Christianity.

8. *Mother with infant*. This refers to an actual incident in the massacre. A woman was thrown over a precipice with her baby in her arms. Three days afterwards she was found dead, with the child still alive, but so closely clasped in her arms that it could hardly be separated from her dead body.

12. **The triple Tyrant**, the Pope, so called from the triple crown, or tiara, worn by him as head of the church.

14. **Babylonian**. The Puritans considered the Roman Catholic Church to be the Babylon mentioned in Revelations, xvii and xviii, as persecuting the saints.

THE CAVALIER POETS

SIR HENRY WOTTON (1568-1639)

Wotton is a link between the poets of Elizabeth's time and the group of Cavalier poets proper. The poem here printed is addressed to Elizabeth, the sister of Charles I. She married Frederick, the Elector Palatine, and became the mother of Prince Rupert, the famous Cavalier leader of the civil wars in England. Her husband's assumption of the title of King of Bohemia led to the terrible Thirty Years' War in Germany. Elizabeth was greatly beloved in England, and "for her winning princely comportment" was called the Queen of Hearts.

TO HIS MISTRESS THE QUEEN OF BOHEMIA

LINE 9. what's your praise? what praise do you receive?

THOMAS CAREW (1589-1639)

Carew is the first of the Cavalier poets. He was an attendant on Charles I, and very popular at the court of that monarch before the outbreak of the civil war. He wrote sonnets, elegies, and at least one elaborate masque; but he is remembered only by his songs. Of these the one here printed is the best known.

ASK ME NO MORE

LINE 3. your beauty's orient deep, the rich Eastern sea of your beauty.

6. golden atoms, the motes that dance in the sunshine.

11. sweet dividing, sweetly singing.

16. their sphere, the circle in the sky from which they fell.

18. **The Phoenix**, a fabulous bird of classic and mediæval legend. It was said to live for five hundred years, and then to burn itself to death on a pyre of spices and fragrant woods. From its ashes sprang a new phoenix.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING (1608-1642)

Suckling was one of the most striking figures at the court of Charles I. He was a courtier, a soldier, and a politician, and only a poet by way of diversion. *A Ballad upon a Wedding*, here given, is his best poem, but the song *Why so pale and wan, Fond Lover?* is probably even better known.

A BALLAD UPON A WEDDING

The wedding was that of Lord Broghill and Lady Margaret Howard. The poem was probably addressed to Lovelace, but it is supposed to be written by a countryman to some rural friend.

1. Dick, Richard Lovelace, the poet.
6. wake, a church festival.
7. Charing-Cross, a cross erected in London by Edward I in memory of his dear queen (*chère reine*), Eleanor. — the way where we do sell our hay, the present Haymarket, a district in London.
13. pest'lent fine, very elegantly dressed.
17. undo, bankrupt.
18. still, always.
19. Course-a-Park, a country game of that day in which girls chose their partners. The men's names in this stanza are those of imaginary friends of the writer and of Dick.
24. of the Crown, of an inn called the Crown.
32. Whitsun-ale, a festival held on the seventh Sunday after Easter. It was customary to choose the prettiest girl at the festival for the Whitsun-lady, but the bride at the wedding was fairer than any country girl ever seen at such a feast.
34. kindly ripe, fully ripened by the sun.
47. sun upon an Easter-day. There was an old superstition that the sun danced every Easter morning for joy in the resurrection of the Lord.
51. undone, ruined by love.
66. spent, lost.
67. nick, nick of time. It was the old custom for the cook to announce that dinner was ready by knocking thrice upon the kitchen table. This served instead of the dinner bell.
71. trained band, militia company.
75. intreated, invited to sit down at table.

85. hats fly off. Men wore their hats at table in those days, but took them off while grace was being said or while drinking a lady's health.

87. One after another of the guests called on the company to drink the bride's health.

89. he made it hers by stealth. The bridegroom secretly drank the bride's health, even when another lady's was proposed.

WHY SO PALE AND WAN, FOND LOVER?

This is a song in Suckling's play, *Aglaure*. Orsames, the singer, calls it "a little foolish counsel I gave a friend of mine four or five years ago when he was falling into a consumption" on account of a hopeless love affair. Its gay indifference strikes the true Cavalier note.

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618-1658)

Lovelace was the handsomest man of his generation, and a great favorite of Charles I. He was twice thrown into prison by Parliament, and spent a large fortune in the king's cause. He died in a cellar in utter poverty just before the return of the Stuarts. The two songs here given are by far the best of his work.

GOING TO THE WARS

This poem may have been written when Lovelace went northward with the king to fight against the Scotch in 1640.

TO ALTHEA FROM PRISON

Lovelace was thrown into prison in 1642, just before the outbreak of the civil war. Althea is the fanciful name which he here gives his sweetheart, Lucy Sacheverell, whom he usually calls Lucasta. On a false report of his death she married another suitor, a step which, it is said, drove her poet lover to despair.

LINE 7. wanton, frolic.

10. allaying Thames, water to weaken the wine.

11. heads with roses bound, like old Greek revelers.

17. committed, caged.

28. That, a prison.

ROBERT HERRICK (1594-1674)

Herrick is the greatest of the Cavalier poets. As a young scholar he sat at the feet of Jonson and was "sealed of the tribe of Ben." He had the good fortune to spend nearly twenty years as a country clergyman in a quiet village in Devonshire, where he could follow his poetic tastes undisturbed by the troubles of the time. His verses give us the prettiest possible picture of country life in merry England before the Puritans became supreme in the land. He was driven from his pulpit by the Puritans in 1648, but was restored when Charles II came back.

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Corinna is a lady's name taken from the Latin poets. It was the custom in Herrick's day for young men and girls to rise before day-break on the first of May, and go out into the fields and groves to gather flowers and green branches for the May Day festival. The song is supposed to be sung at the window of a sleeping girl early on May morning.

LINE 2. the god unshorn, Apollo, the god of the sun, with his long flowing locks.

3. Aurora, the goddess of the dawn.

5. slug-a-bed, lazy girl.

10. matins, morning prayers.

13. Whenas, when.

14. Spring, rise.

17. Flora, the goddess of flowers.

21. the childhood of the day, the early morning.

22. orient pearls, Eastern pearls, here used for dewdrops.

24. dew-locks, dewy locks.

25. Titan, the sun.

28. beads, prayers.

TO ANTHEA

Anthea is another lady's name often found in Herrick's poems. If he had as many sweethearts as he has different ladies' names in his verses, he must have been a most inconstant lover. Probably, however, most of his ladies were purely imaginary persons.

LINE 2. *Protestant*, used here in the sense of 'champion.'

18. *cypress-tree*, a dark evergreen tree often planted in graveyards, and so most suitable to cover a despairing lover's head.

THE NIGHT PIECE

This night song is a beautiful contrast to the morning song to Corinna which precedes it. Julia is, perhaps, the lady's name which occurs most frequently in Herrick's poems.

LINE 1. the glow-worm, not our firefly, but a sort of beetle common in England, which shows a pale green light after dark.

7. *slow-worm*, a small snakelike lizard, considered very poisonous.

CHERRY-RIPE

"Cherry-ripe" was a street cry in London in Herrick's day.

UPON PREW HIS MAID

Prudence Baldwin, Herrick's maid, or housekeeper, is often mentioned in his poems. This little quatrain is one of the most graceful of English epitaphs.

THE WHITE ISLAND

Herrick was not only a poet of love and pleasure, but wrote some beautiful religious verses. This poem, one of the best examples of his sacred verse, serves to connect him with such poets as Herbert and Vaughan. The white island of Greek mythology was identified by a Latin writer, Pliny, with the Islands of the Blessed.

LINE 9. that whiter Island, Heaven, — whiter because more beautiful than the fabled island of Greek legend.

11. *Candour*, whiteness.

23. *too*, 'to,' the sign of the infinitive "have" in the next line. Herrick seems to have spelled it "too" only for the sake of the rhyme.

EDMUND WALLER (1605-1687)

Waller links the Cavalier poets to the age of Dryden, as Wotton joins them to that of Elizabeth. He was one of the first of English poets to use the polished heroic couplet; but he is now best remembered by two lovely songs, one of which is here given.

ON A GIRDLE

LINE 5. Heaven's extremest sphere, the highest circle in heaven.

6. pale, fence.

9. compass, circle.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

Herbert, one of the truest of English religious poets, gave up the life of a courtier for that of a country parson. His poems combine the fantastic conceits which were so popular in the verse of his day with a very sweet and simple spirit of devotion.

VIRTUE

LINE 10. compacted, closely packed.

11. My music, etc. 'Just as a sweet piece of music comes to an end, so the sweet day must close.' Herbert was passionately fond of music.

14. gives, yields, gives out.

15-16. 'The soul reaches its higher life only after all the world has passed away.'

THE ELIXIR

The elixir, in the language of the old alchemists, was a wonder-working fluid which sustained and prolonged life. Herbert used the word metaphorically to denote the influence which the principle of action for God's sake has upon life.

LINE 7. his tincture, its portion of this elixir.

13. the famous stone, the philosopher's stone, which was supposed to turn all things that it touched to gold.

16. told, counted.

HENRY VAUGHAN (1621-1695)

Vaughan was a Welsh physician, who in poetry imitated, and sometimes surpassed, Herbert. Most of his poetry is of unequal merit, but the hymn here printed is well-nigh perfect.

PEACE

LINE 8. files, ranks.

17. ranges, roaming.

JOHN DRYDEN

From MAC FLECKNOE

SHADWELL

This extract is taken from Dryden's poem, *Mac Flecknoe: A Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet, T. S.* The poem is an attack upon Shadwell, a poet of some note in Dryden's day. He and Dryden were friends at one time, but they quarreled over politics. Shadwell was a Whig poet, while Dryden upheld the court, or Tory, side.

Some of Dryden's best work is found in his satires. He stands without a rival in English poetry as a writer of biting invective.

LINE 3. *Flecknoe*, Richard Flecknoe, a versifier of very weak powers, who had just died when Dryden wrote this poem. To represent Shadwell as the literary son of Flecknoe was, of course, a bitter insult. — *Augustus* is Augustus Cæsar, the first Roman emperor, who, at the age of thirty-three, made himself master of Rome, and ruled with a firm hand forty-four years.

7. This aged prince, Flecknoe, the Prince of Dullness.

8. This line means that Flecknoe's stupid followers and imitators were numerous.

10. To settle the succession of the state, to decide who should succeed him as the King of the Realm of Nonsense.

23. *genuine night*, absolute dullness.

25. *goodly fabrick*. Shadwell was a very large man. *Fabrick* here refers to his body.

29. Heywood and Shirley were dramatists of the preceding generation.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST; OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

This ode is said to have been written by Dryden in one night. It was composed for a musical organization in London on the occasion of their festival in honor of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. St. Cecilia was an early Christian martyr, who, according to a legend, was especially devoted to music.

LINE 1. *for Persia won*, in celebration of the conquest of Persia.

2. *Philip's warlike son*, Alexander the Great, King of Macedon. After conquering the greater part of the known world, he died at the age of thirty-three, still sighing for more worlds to conquer. He and

his father, Philip, made Macedon, a country on the northern border of Greece, the greatest kingdom of their day.

7. Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound. It was a common custom at Grecian banquets to adorn the brows of guests with garlands.

9. Thais, a woman famous for her wit and beauty.

20. Timotheus, a Theban musician who was in high favor at Alexander's court.

21. quire, now spelled 'choir.'

25. He began by singing of Jove, the chief of the Grecian gods.

26. seats, abodes.

28. belied, disguised. The line means that Jove took the form of a fiery dragon.

29. radiant spires, shining coils. The reference is probably to the dragon's tail.

30. Olympia, Alexander's mother.

33. There was a legend current in Alexander's day which spoke of him as the son of Jove.

39. Assumes the god, acts as a god is supposed to act.

40. Affects to nod, imitates the nod of Jove.

47. Bacchus, the god of wine.

52. honest, handsome.

53. hautboys, wind instruments like a flute, and high in tone. It is pronounced *hō'bois*.

67. Fought all his battles o'er again. It is related that Alexander, under the influence of Timotheus's music, once rushed from his seat and seized his weapons.

69. The master, Timotheus, the musician.

70. His refers to Alexander.

71. he refers to Alexander also.

72. The first "his" refers to Timotheus, and the second to Alexander.

73. He is Timotheus again.

76. By too severe a fate. Darius, the king of the Persians, was assassinated soon after his final defeat by Alexander.

93. The mighty master, Timotheus.

97. Lydian measures. Lydia was a district in Asia Minor; its music was noted for its softness.

107. The many, the crowd.

132. Furies. The Furies were the avenging goddesses in Grecian mythology. They are often spoken of as having serpents writhing in their hair.

139. **unburied remain.** It was a belief among the ancient Greeks that unless the bodies of the dead were buried, the spirits of the dead men wandered on the earth and tormented the living.

147. **a flambeau, a lighted torch.**

148. **Thais led the way.** It is told of Thais that she influenced Alexander, during a great feast, to set fire to the palace of the Persian kings.

150. **like another Helen, fired another Troy.** Helen was the wife of the Grecian king, Menelaus. A Trojan prince, Paris, won her heart while he was on a visit at the house of King Menelaus, and took her back with him to Troy. This act so enraged all the Greeks that they rose against Troy, and, after a long war, succeeded in destroying the city. As Helen was the cause of the fall of Troy, so Thais was the cause of the destruction of the royal palace of the Persians. The story of Helen and the siege of Troy is told in Homer's *Iliad*.

162. **the vocal frame, the organ.** "Frame" here means 'machine' or 'instrument.' It is called "vocal" because it has some of the qualities of the human voice.

163. **sacred store, sacred knowledge.**

164-165. By enlarging "the former narrow bounds" of vocal music, and by adding "length to solemn sounds" by means of pipes, she became the inventor of the church organ.

166. **With, with the help of.**

169. **He raised a mortal to the skies.** By his playing, Timotheus caused Alexander to imagine himself a god.

170. **She drew an angel down.** In the oldest legend an angel is described as hovering about St. Cecilia as a heavenly guard. Out of this legend grew up the later story that the angel was drawn down from heaven by St. Cecilia's divine singing and playing.

ALEXANDER POPE

From THE EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

This poem, written for the greater part about 1734, though containing several earlier passages, is perhaps the cleverest and most polished of all Pope's satires. But it is something more than a satire. It seems to have been called out by the attacks of his enemies, not only upon his writings, but upon his person, his morals, and his family, and it constitutes the poet's *apologia*, his defense of himself against the charges of his hostile critics.

"The unity of the poem," says Leslie Stephen, "is given by the poet's own intense interest in himself; and the best way of learning to enjoy Pope is to get this poem by heart. It presents us a picture of Pope, not as he really was, but as he wished to be and wished others to think him."

Arbuthnot was a famous doctor of Pope's time, physician to Queen Anne, and the intimate friend of Swift, Pope, and Bolingbroke. He was a man of letters as well as a physician.

LINE 1. John, John Serle, Pope's faithful servant.

4. Bedlam. Bedlam, or Bethlehem, Hospital in London was an asylum for lunatics. — Parnassus, a mountain in Greece, supposed to be the home of the Muses. In this line it stands for the home of the Muses' followers, the poets. Pope here connects lunatics and poets, very much as Theseus does in Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, when he says,

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.

8. my grot, an artificial cave, or rather a tunnel under the public highway, which Pope made in his garden at Twickenham.

10. the chariot, the carriage in which Pope drove. — the barge, the boat in which he was rowed upon the Thames.

12. Sabbath-day, that is, day of rest.

13. the Mint, a little district in London. As people were safe from arrest within its boundaries, it became a refuge for fugitive debtors.

15. be-mus'd, muddled.

21. Twit'nam, a contraction for Twickenham.

27. Friend to my life, Arbuthnot, Pope's physician.

40. Keep your piece nine years, let nine years pass between writing and publishing a poem,—the advice which the old Latin author, Horace, gave to budding poets.

41. Drury-lane. In Pope's day, one of the haunts of poverty-stricken authors.

43. Term, the London social season.

111. Grubstreet, a street in London in which dwelt many of the poor hack writers, who were Pope's great enemies.

116. Horace, the famous Latin poet. He was short, fat, and apparently subject to colds.

117. Ammon's great son, Alexander the Great, who boasted that he was the son of the god Jupiter Ammon.

118. Ovid, the famous Latin poet. His family name was Naso, the Latin for 'nose.' — an eye. Pope really had a large and very fine eye.

120. All that disgrac'd my betters. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the famous portrait painter, said : " Pope was about four feet six high, very hump backed and deformed. His mouth had those peculiar marks which are always found in the mouths of crooked persons ; and the muscles which run across the cheeks were so strongly marked as to appear like small cords." He was extremely sensitive to any allusion to his deformity, and in this passage expresses his anger at the flatterers who compared his physical characteristics with those of Horace, Alexander, and others.

122. Maro, Virgil.

127. a fool to fame, a slave to ambition.

128. numbers, poetry.

134. to bear, to endure the ills of an invalid's life.

148. pure description. Pope is referring to his early descriptive poems, *The Pastorals* and *Windsor Forest*.

149. Fanny, Pope's nickname for his enemy, Lord Hervey.

151. Gildon, a hack writer of the day, who abused Pope and his family in a *Life of Wycherly*. Pope believed, or pretended to believe, that Addison paid Gildon for this abuse.

153. Dennis, an inferior poet and critic of the time, a bitter enemy of Pope.

197. too fond to rule, too fond of ruling.

198. the Turk, the Grand Turk, or Sultan. It was not unusual in old times for a sultan, on his accession to the throne, to kill his brothers in order to free himself from possible rivals. Shakespeare alludes to this practice when he makes Henry V say to his brothers on their father's death,

Brothers you mix your sadness with some fear :
This is the English, not the Turkish court ;
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry Harry.

208. obliged. Pope pronounced this word 'obleeged.'

209. Cato, the Younger, a famous Roman statesman, the hero of Addison's tragedy of that name. — little senate. A feeble remnant of the Roman senate gathered around Cato in his last struggle against Julius Cæsar. Pope compares the little coterie of Addison's friends and followers to this body.

211. templars, students in the Temple, one of the famous London law schools.

214. *Atticus*, a name given to Addison in one of the *Spectators*. This famous satirical sketch of Addison was written long before the rest of the poem. Pope says that he wrote it as early as 1715, and sent it to Addison in revenge for that author's having paid Gildon to abuse him. But this is doubtful. When the lines were first printed Addison's name appeared where "*Atticus*" now stands.

349. An allusion to a story that Pope was once whipped by some of his enemies and that he wept with pain and rage.

350. An allusion to the slanderous stories circulated by Pope's enemies.

353. *The pictur'd shape*. Pope was frequently caricatured as a hunchback or an ape.

357. *his sovereign's ear*. Lord Hervey, Pope's bitter enemy, held a confidential position at the court.

391. *Bestia*, possibly Horace Walpole, brother of the famous statesman, notorious for his uncleanly habits.

393. *marrying discord*. An allusion to Addison's unhappy marriage with the Countess of Warwick.

397. *dar'd an oath*. Pope's father, as a Roman Catholic, declined to take the oath of allegiance, or the oath against the Pope of Rome.

From THE DUNCIAD

The Dunciad is a mock heroic poem written by Pope as a satire on his many enemies, whom he called the Dunces. The first three books of the poem tell of the choice and coronation of a new king of the Dunces, and are full of savage thrusts at Pope's enemies. In the fourth book, which was written much later, the goddess herself comes "in her majesty," to use Pope's phrase, "to destroy Order and Science and to substitute the Kingdom of the Dull upon earth." After receiving the homage of her worshipers and encouraging them in their war upon Wit, Dullness concludes the session with a terrible yawn, whose benumbing influence sweeps irresistibly over the land. Passing abruptly from jest to earnest, the poem concludes with the passage here selected, — a terrible vision of the consequences of the final triumph of Ignorance and Disorder.

These lines are generally considered the strongest and most impressive in all Pope's verse. It is said that he himself admired them so much that his voice used to falter with emotion when he repeated them. "And well it might, sir," said Dr. Johnson when he heard this anecdote, "for they are noble lines."

LINE 1. She, the goddess Dullness, of whom the poet has been speaking.

2. Night and Chaos are spoken of in the first book of *The Dunciad* as the parents of Dullness.

3. Fancy, here equivalent to Imagination.

5. Wit, intellectual brilliancy.

6. The meteor, the flash of genius.

7. Medea, a famous enchantress in classical legend, whose charms were able to veil the light of the stars.

9. Argus' . . . Hermes'. Argus was a monster in Grecian legend who had a hundred eyes, of which only two slept at one time. Juno, the queen of the gods, appointed him the guardian of a white heifer into which a beautiful lady had been transformed. Jove, however, sent Hermes, *i.e.*, Mercury, to set the heifer free. Mercury played so sweetly on his pipe that Argus closed all his eyes in slumber, whereupon Mercury sealed them fast with his magic wand and then cut off his head.

13. her old cavern. An allusion to the old saying, "Truth lies at the bottom of a well."

14. casuistry, the science which applies the general rules of religion and morality to particular instances. This was often done in a quibbling and evasive fashion, it being the attempt of the casuist to show that circumstances altered cases. The word, consequently, has a bad meaning, and is here used to denote the reasoning which covers up and conceals the truth.

15-16. In these lines Pope is thinking of some philosophers of his own day who tried to explain away the existence of God by referring natural phenomena to a "second cause," that is, to a natural origin other than God. Pope asserts that when Philosophy abandons God and confines itself to the investigation of natural phenomena, it ceases to be true philosophy.

17-20. Under the benumbing influence of Dullness, Physic, *i.e.*, Natural Science, seeks aid from Metaphysic, *i.e.*, Mental Science, and Metaphysic, in turn, from the testimony of the senses. At the same time the attempt is made to demonstrate by mathematics the mysteries of religion. This confusion of things which ought to be kept separate is one of the first effects of the approach of Dullness, and as a result of this confusion the various sciences mentioned become vain and lifeless.

21. Religion blushes at the impudence of those who attack and the folly of those who defend her.

22. **unawares** Morality expires. Pope believed that morality could not exist without religion, but would imperceptibly ("unawares") vanish from a land where religion had ceased to exist.

26. **uncreating word**. Just as the creation began with the word of God, "Let there be light," so the empire of Chaos, the opposite of creation, is imagined as beginning with an annihilating ("uncreating") word, which quenches all light.

27. **Anarch**, an author of anarchy, that is, of disorder. Milton, from whom Pope borrowed the word, applies it to Chaos, as Pope does here.

ODE ON SOLITUDE

This charming little poem is a free translation of an ode of Horace. Pope wrote it when he was only twelve years old, but corrected and revised it several times before he printed it in his works. It shows the gentle and better side of his nature, a side too often neglected by those who think of him only as the bitter satirist of a corrupt society.

THOMAS GRAY

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

An elegy is a meditative poem with a sorrowful theme. Gray, in this poem, expresses sorrow for the "destiny obscure" of "the rude forefathers of the hamlet." He pities them for their narrow lot in life, and discusses the question, without reaching any solution, why some men's lives are more highly favored by circumstances than others.

The poem deals with thoughts that are common to all, — thoughts about life, toil, success, death, and eternity, — thoughts which never lose their hold on the human mind. And these thoughts are expressed in meter which is melodious to the ear, and in language which fits perfectly the serenity, dignity, and nobleness of the thought. This perfect combination of meter, thought, and language gives the poem a hold on the hearts and minds of men which bids fair to be lasting.

LINE 1. **curfew**. See note on Milton's *Il Penseroso*, l. 74.

5. **on the sight**, from the sight.

7. **droning**, dully humming.

10. moping, drowsy and discontented.
12. reign, realm.
22. ply her evening care, perform her evening tasks.
26. glebe, the soil.
31. Grandeur, people in high position.
33. heraldry, the science of all that pertains to genealogies and coats of arms. In this line the "boast of heraldry" means the pride of birth.
38. trophies, memorials of any sort placed over graves. It refers here to busts, columns, or other costly memorials.
39. Where, in the interior of the church. In Gray's time, and long before, it was the custom to bury people of rank and fortune in the interior of the church, and place busts, recumbent figures, or other memorials over their graves. The "rude forefathers," however, were laid to rest in the churchyard. — fretted vault, the arched roof, ornamented with fretwork.
41. storied urn. Urns were used by the ancients to hold the ashes of the dead. In modern times they are sometimes placed on tombs with inscriptions which tell the story of the dead man's life.
43. provoke, arouse.
57. Hampden. John Hampden, a country gentleman of ability and fortune, who refused to pay the ship-money tax which was levied by King Charles I without the consent of Parliament. He was a cousin of Oliver Cromwell, and died fighting for the Puritan cause.
58. The little Tyrant of his fields, perhaps the "village-Hampden's" landlord.
60. Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. This is Oliver Cromwell, the great Puritan leader, who brought Charles I to the block in 1649. He became ruler of England as Lord Protector.
- Gray seems to have shared the prevailing notion of his day, that Cromwell was a bloody usurper. In line 67 he is referred to as wading "through slaughter to a throne." The modern view of Cromwell is more free from prejudice. It considers him, with all his faults, a sincere patriot.
65. lot, the grammatical subject of "circumscrib'd"; it is also the subject of "forbad" in line 67.
66. Their growing virtues, the growth of their virtues.
67. See note on line 60.
- 71-72. These two lines refer to the system of patronage that prevailed in Gray's time. Pensions or gifts were bestowed on poverty-stricken poets, who in return sang the praises of their patrons. This was one

of the humiliations in life, Gray thinks, that the "lowly train" were free from.

73. madding, excited, raging.

81. unletter'd Muse, illiterate people who compose crude epitaphs in verse.

84. moralist, one whose mind likes to dwell on serious subjects.

95. chance, by chance.

97. Haply, perhaps. — swain, a countryman.

121. bounty, kindness of heart.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

This poem has been justly praised for its unusual descriptive power. Its clear-cut pictures of homely life, its delicate humor, its strong and sincere human sympathy at once call to mind Chaucer, the greatest of all English descriptive poets.

Goldsmith no doubt meant the poem to be didactic, that is, he intended it to teach a lesson. This was a literary fashion in his day. He wished to show that luxury, which had come in the train of trade, was bringing on the decay of the country. His arguments to this effect have convinced only the unthinking few, while the vividly descriptive parts of the poem have delighted its thousands and tens of thousands.

LINE 1. Sweet Auburn! This place probably existed only in the brain of the poet. It is possible that he had in mind the small village in Ireland in which he was born.

2. swain, peasant, farm laborer.

4. parting, departing.

10. cot, small cottage.

12. decent, modest.

16. This line means that when toil was over for the day, play had its turn.

17. train, crowd.

25. simply, in a simple, artless way.

27. mistrustless, here equivalent to ignorant.

35. lawn, open country.

37. tyrant's hand, the power of wealth.

39-40. These lines refer to the buying up of small farms by men of wealth, who consolidated them, and turned some of the tilled land into pleasure parks and hunting preserves. By this arrangement, "half a tillage stints" the "smiling plain," that is, curtails its producing power.

44. *hollow-sounding bittern*. The bittern is a bird of the heron family, having long neck and legs, and frequenting marshes. Its cry has a hollow sound.

45. *lapwing*, the plover. It is sometimes called the peewit.

51-52. It is a sad day for any country, of course, when "men decay." But do men necessarily decay when wealth is accumulated? There may be such a tendency to decay, but are there not many counteracting influences at work, such as sport, war, struggle for distinction, and inherited sturdiness?

64. This refers to the merging of small farms into large estates, which has been spoken of already (see note to lines 39-40). Goldsmith ignores the fact that many of these small farmers found employment in the large business enterprises that were built up by trade or commerce. England's "bold peasantry" was not entirely uprooted, however, nor is it ever likely to be.

115. *careless*, free from care.

130. *plashy*, "puddle-like" (Hales).

132. *mantling*, covering as with a mantle.

136. *The sad historian*. The "wretched matron" was the only one left to tell of the people and ways of the good old times.

142. *passing rich*, surpassing rich, more than rich. — *forty pounds a year*. Forty pounds is nearly equal to two hundred dollars. Money was probably worth twice as much in Goldsmith's day as it is now; the preacher's salary was, therefore, in the neighborhood of four hundred dollars a year.

162. *His pity gave ere charity began*. This line means that his heart melted towards the unfortunate before it occurred to him that it was his duty to offer them charity.

164. An example will illustrate the meaning of this line. Let us suppose that a man is so courageous that at times he becomes reckless; this recklessness is a fault, but it leans to the side of courage, which is a virtue. Just so the "failings" of the village preacher were virtues pushed too far.

170. Goldsmith's description of the village preacher at once calls to mind Chaucer's parson. These two pictures of a true parson are the best that can be found anywhere.

209. **terms and tides presage.** "Terms" are the periods of time during which the law courts are held; "tides" are times in the calendar, such as Christmastide, Eastertide, Springtide.

210. **could gauge,** knew how to measure the contents of barrels and other vessels.

232. **The twelve good rules.** These were rules of conduct placed on the walls of the tavern. Some of them were: Pick no quarrels; Keep no bad company; Lay no wagers. It was a common custom in Goldsmith's time for taverns to decorate their walls with such sets of rules. — the royal game of goose. This was probably the old game of the fox and the geese.

236. **chimney, fireplace.**

244. **the wood-man's ballad, the hunter's song.**

248. **mantling bliss, foaming ale.**

281. **His seat, his country house.** — **solitary sports,** sports in which the plainer people did not mingle.

284. **For, in exchange for.**

285. **all, entirely.**

316. **artist, artisan.**

319. **dome, house, building.**

344. **Altama, the Altamaha, a river in Georgia.**

355. Goldsmith, in this passage, is letting his imagination run loose. There were never any tigers in Georgia, nor can its climate be called "torrid." On the whole, the immigrants who came to find homes in the New World seem to have bettered their condition in life, and to have been contented and happy.

418. **Torno's cliffs, the cliffs that overhang the Torneo, a river which forms the boundary between Sweden and Russia.** — **Pambamarca, a mountain in Ecuador, South America.**

428. **laboured mole, a wall of stone built in the sea to protect the harbor from the violence of the waves.** "Laboured" means, of course, built by labor.

Goldsmith seems to think that the prosperity which is built up by commerce may fall, just as a stone wall may be swept away by the sea; while, on the other hand, the prosperity which comes from "self-dependent power," that is, from the efforts of the farmer who digs with his own hands, will last forever. The poet sees but one side of this question. He forgets that commerce widens the market for agricultural products, and brings in return many of the comforts of life; that it gives employment to many who might otherwise be idle; that it helps to build roads, schools, hospitals, and churches.

WILLIAM COWPER

ON THE LOSS OF THE ROYAL GEORGE

The *Royal George*, an English man-of-war, was lost in the harbor of Spithead, in the south of England, in August, 1782. She had been heeled over for repairs, when a sudden squall threw her on her beam ends, and as her ports had been left open, she filled and sank, carrying down with her the greater part of her crew.

LINE 14. *Kempenfelt*, Admiral *Kempenfelt*, in command of the *Royal George*.

25. *Weigh the vessel up*. When Cowper wrote this poem, it was hoped that the *Royal George* might be raised, but the project was abandoned. Cowper says that he wrote this poem to encourage the undertaking, but it was not published until after his death.

BOADICEA

AN ODE

Boadicea was a British queen living in the first century of the Christian era when the Romans were rulers of Britain. On her husband's death all his treasures were seized by the Romans, and when Boadicea objected, she was publicly flogged, and her daughters were insulted in the most shameful fashion. In consequence she headed a revolt in which thousands of Romans perished, but on being defeated in a great battle she poisoned herself.

LINE 6. *the Druid*. The Druids were the priests of the ancient Britains. They were supposed to have the gift of prophecy.

20. *the Gaul*. This word is here used in a general sense for the Northern tribes, — Goths, Vandals, and others, — that overthrew the Roman empire.

21-24. These lines are a prophecy of the achievements of the later Romans, that is, the Italians, in poetry and music.

27. *Armed with thunder, armed with cannon*. — *wings*, the white sails of the British navy.

32. *None invincible*, no race so unconquerable.

34. *Full of heavenly inspiration*.

ROBERT BURNS

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

This is one of the best known of Burns's poems. The stanza is borrowed from Spenser, and a great part of the diction is drawn from English sources; but, on the other hand, the theme of the poem is characteristically Scotch. A cotter was a farm hand to whom his landlord assigned a cottage in part payment of his wages. Burns's father was one of this class, and the picture here drawn shows us the early home life of the poet himself, and that of thousands of other Scotch peasants in his day, and for two centuries before.

The poem is addressed to Robert Aiken, a friend of Burns, who first gave the poet a taste of fame by reading his verses to the Ayrshire gentry.

LINE 6. The lowly train, the peasantry.

9. ween, think.

10. blaws, blows. — sugh, sigh, wail.

12. frae, from. — pleugh, plough.

13. craws, crows.

15. moil, toil.

21. stacher, stagger, totter.

22. flichterin, fluttering.

23. wee bit ingle, little fire.

28. Belyve, soon. — bairns, children.

30. ca', drive. — herd, tend the sheep or cattle. — tentie rin, carefully run

31. cannie, quiet.

34. braw, brave, fine.

35. sair-won penny-fee, hard-earned wages.

38. spiers, asks.

40. uncoss, strange things.

44. 'Makes old clothes look almost as good as new.'

48. eydent, diligent.

49. jauk, trifle.

56. wha kens, who knows.

57. neebor, neighbor.

62. haffins, half.

64. ben, inside. A Scotch cottage in Burns's day had but two rooms: the 'but,' or outer room, and the 'ben,' or inner room, which served as kitchen, dining room, and general gathering place for the family.

66. no ill ta'en, not badly received.

- 67. cracks, chats. — kye, cows.
- 69. blate and laithfu', bashful and shy.
- 70. wi', with.
- 72. the lave, the rest, other girls.
- 92. halesome parritch, wholesome oatmeal porridge.
- 93. soupe, milk. — hawkie, cow.
- 94. 'yont the hallan. In the most humble cottages the family lived in one room, the cow in the other beyond the "hallan," or partition.
- 96. weel-hain'd kebbuck, well-kept cheese. — fell, strong.
- 97. 'Often he is urged to take more, and often he says it is very good.'
- 99. towmond, twelve month. — sin' lint was i' the bell, when the flax was last in bloom.

103. ha'-Bible, the family Bible. In former times a big volume of the Scriptures used to lie in the hall, or chief room, of every gentleman's house, where the family servants and laborers met for common worship. This was called the 'Hall Bible.' When Bibles became more common, the name was transferred to every family Bible, even to that of a cottager. — ance, once.

- 104. bonnet, the blue cap once worn by every Scotch peasant.
- 105. lyart haffets, gray locks.
- 107. wales, chooses.
- 111-113. Dundee, Martyrs, Elgin, the names of familiar Scottish hymn tunes.
- 113. beets, feeds.
- 121. Amalek, the name of a tribe that attacked the Israelites in the desert.
- 122. the royal Bard, David.
- 127. the Christian volume, the New Testament.
- 133. Patmos, an island in the Mediterranean to which St. John was banished, and where he saw the visions which he recorded in the Book of Revelations.
- 138. This line is borrowed from Pope, as is line 166.
- 167. certes, certainly.
- 182. Wallace, the great defender of Scotland against the English invaders under Edward I in the thirteenth century.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT

This noble song of human brotherhood was written by Burns on New Year's Day, 1795. It is an eloquent protest against the position of determined hostility which the ruling classes of England had then assumed toward the democratic principles of the French Revolution.

LINE 2. hings, hangs. — a', all.

8. gowd, gold.

9. hamely, homely, plain.

10. hoddin-grey, coarse woolen cloth.

11. Gie, give.

15. e'er sae poor, ever so poor.

17. birkie, conceited fellow.

18. Wha, who.

20. coof, blockhead.

22. riband, star, decorations worn by a lord to denote an order of knighthood conferred on him by royalty.

27. aboon, above.

28. mauna fa', must not pretend to.

36. bear the gree, take the first place in honor.

AULD LANG SYNE

LINE 4. auld lang syne, literally, 'old long ago.' An old Scotch phrase equivalent, perhaps, to the 'good old days.'

5. 'Pay for your own pint mug.'

9. braes, hillsides.

10. pou'd the gowans, pulled the daisies.

11. fit, foot.

12. Sin', since.

13. paidl'd in the burn, paddled in the brook.

14. dine, dinner time, noon.

15. braid, broad.

17. fiere, comrade, friend.

18. gie 's, give us.

19. guid-willie waught, draught of good will, like the cup of kindness in line 7.

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW

Burns wrote this little song for his wife, Jean Armour. It was composed just after their marriage, when she was staying at his mother's, while he was preparing their future home at Ellisland, a little distance to the east.

LINE 1. the airts, the directions.

4. lo'e, love.

- 5. row, roll.
- 14. shaw, thicket.
- 16. minds, reminds.

HIGHLAND MARY

This song was written in memory of Mary Campbell, a young peasant girl from Argyleshire, with whom Burns had been very deeply in love a year or so before his marriage. She left him in the spring of 1786 to return to her home, perhaps to prepare for the voyage to the West Indies which he had asked her to make with him. In the autumn of the same year she died, without ever having seen her lover again.

LINE 2. **castle o' Montgomery**, a castle in Ayrshire near which Burns said farewell to Mary Campbell.

- 4. drumlie, muddy.
- 9. birk, birch.
- 18. fu', full.
- 23. cauld, cold.
- 28. dwalt, dwelled.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ODE TO DUTY

In this poem Wordsworth's Puritanism is strongly displayed. He had the Puritan's humility before his Maker, his stern purpose to do what was expected of him, and his longing for the spirit of self-sacrifice. Like Milton, he dwelt ever in his "great Task-Master's eye."

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN
BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

Wordsworth loved nature, not only for its sensuous charm, but for its power to purify both feeling and thought, to sanctify both pain and fear, to cheer the spirit in times of despondency, and to make men realize "a grandeur in the beatings of the human heart" because the "Spirit of the universe" was in it all. Wordsworth seems always to be conscious of this fellowship of nature.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

Wordsworth never felt at home amid the fret and scramble of modern life. His "soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." He was, therefore, naturally disgusted that men, in their struggle for place and power, should shut their eyes and ears to the simpler pleasures afforded by God's handiwork.

LINE 13. Proteus, a sea god who had the power of changing his shape at will.

14. Triton, also a sea god, the son of Neptune, and his trumpeter. He is described as having the upper part of the body like that of a man, and the lower part like that of a fish.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Westminster Bridge is one of the best known of the several bridges that span the Thames as it runs through London.

MILTON

This sonnet stands deservedly high for its noble tone and for its fine and full appreciation of Milton's character. It is also a spirited call to men of sluggish conscience and selfish aims to bestir themselves and become men of "manners, virtue, freedom, power."

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM
ABBOTSFORD TO NAPLES

This sonnet was written on the departure of Sir Walter Scott from Abbotsford, his home in Scotland, to Naples in 1831 in search of health. Sir Walter had met with heavy financial losses by the failure of a publishing house in Edinburgh with which he was connected. He set to work with rare heroism to earn money with his pen with which to pay off the debts. The task, however, was too great for a man of his age, and his health was hopelessly wrecked. Wordsworth was right in saying that "the might of the whole world's good wishes" went with him in his search for health in southern Europe.

LINE 3. Eildon's triple height, Eildon hills, three cone-shaped peaks not far from Abbotsford.

4. Spirits of Power. The spirits, which according to old legends dwelt in the streams and hills of this country, are supposed to be

lamenting the departure of a kindred spirit in Sir Walter. Scott was often called the Wizard of the North.

6. Tweed, a well-known river in Scotland, on the banks of which Abbotsford was situated.

13. the midland sea, the Mediterranean.

14. Parthenope, the poetical name of Naples.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

This poem is a good example of Wordsworth's delicacy of feeling, as well as of his power to see the poetic side of the simple ways of life.

LINE 16. Hebrides, a group of islands off the west coast of Scotland.

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

This poem shows Wordsworth in his gayer and more sprightly mood. His loneliness quickly gives way to almost boyish delight, and his heart "dances with the daffodils."

LINE 21. inward eye, the power of recalling former scenes.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

Wordsworth has nowhere, perhaps, expressed so clearly and so charmingly his idea of what a woman should be. It is neither the ideal of the Puritan nor of the Cavalier; it is, perhaps, a blending of the two, containing in addition the more modern conception of woman as the true helpmate of man.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

THE ANCIENT MARINER

This poem is written in the style of the old ballads, both in meter and in language. The tripping movement of the verse lends itself easily to the brisk movement of the story, while the use of quaint, archaic expressions gives it, to some extent, the flavor of the old ballad.

The poet plainly had two purposes in mind, — to write a highly imaginative poem filled with the supernatural, the gruesome, and even the blood-curdling, and to point the moral that

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small.

PART I

LINE 1. It is an ancient Mariner. This abrupt way of beginning a ballad is not uncommon.

12. Eftsoons, very soon, speedily.

23. kirk, church. The word is still used in Scotland.

32. bassoon, a bass wind instrument.

36. minstrelsy, musicians.

51. They had crossed the equator and were going towards the south pole.

56. sheen, gleam.

57. ken, see, recognize.

62. swoond, swoon, fainting fit.

63. Albatross, a large South Sea bird.

65. It was a superstition among sailors that the albatross brought good luck.

69. thunder-fit, thunder-clap.

71. The ship has now turned and is sailing northward.

75. shroud, a sail rope. It extends from the head of the mast to the side of the ship.

76. vespers, evenings.

82. The foolish, useless shooting of the friendly albatross is supposed to be the cause of all the troubles that followed.

PART II

98. uprist, uprose.

127. in reel and rout, in a lively dance and in crowds.

128. death-fires, strange lights, sometimes called 'corpse-candles,' which, according to an old superstition, foreshadowed the death of the person who saw them.

PART III

152. wist, knew, perceived.

164. Gramercy, great thanks. It is here used simply as an exclamation.

178. Heaven's Mother, the Virgin Mary.

184. gossameres, gossamers, spider webs.

209. clomb, old form for climbed.

212. the star-dogged Moon. "It is a common superstition among sailors that something evil is about to happen whenever a star dogs the moon" (Coleridge).

PART IV

245. or ever, before.

PART V

294. Mary Queen, the Virgin Mary.

297. silly, here equivalent to useless.

314. sheen, bright, shining.

348. corses. 'Corse' is the poetic form for corpse.

379. The spirit, the spirit of the polar regions, which had been offended by the useless killing of the albatross.

PART VI

The two voices that speak here are the voices mentioned in line 396.

452. But soon there breathed a wind on me. Because the ancient mariner had repented of his cruelty in killing the albatross, the polar spirit became his friend and sent a magic breeze which blew him back to his own country.

489. by the holy rood. The "holy rood" was the cross on which Christ was crucified. The expression came into such common use that it lost all sense of profanity.

509. Hermit, a religious recluse.

512. shrieve, shrive. The line means that the hermit will hear him confess his sin and grant him pardon.

PART VII

524. trow, think, imagine.

535. ivy-tod, ivy bush.

WALTER SCOTT

From THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

BREATHES THERE A MAN WITH SOUL SO DEAD

These five stanzas are taken from the sixth canto of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and are there put into the mouth of the old singer who is telling the story. But they give such perfect expression to Scott's own love of country, that it has seemed worth while to take them from their setting.

LINE 17. *Caledonia*, the poetic name for Scotland.

26. of all bereft. The old minstrel who is speaking had lost all his friends and children.

30. *Yarrow*, a famous little river in the Border country.

32. *Ettrick*, a little stream flowing into the *Yarrow*.

30-33. These four lines are carved on the monument to Scott in *Selkirk*, the chief town of the county, of which he was for many years the sheriff.

A WEARY LOT IS THINE, FAIR MAID

This perfect song is taken from Scott's long poem, *Rokeby*, where it is put into the mouth of an unhappy minstrel who has sunk to be the companion and accomplice of a band of robbers.

LINE 4. *the rue*, a plant regarded as an emblem of sorrow. A very bitter juice was obtained from it.

7. *Lincoln green*, a woolen cloth dyed with a color produced at the town of *Lincoln* in England. It was worn by foresters especially.

12. *fain*, gladly.

HUNTING SONG

This song preserves the tone of the old hunting choruses which in former days summoned lords and ladies at daybreak to the noble sport of the chase.

LINE 3. *the jolly chase*, the hunting party.

5. *couples*. Before being loosed to hunt the stag, the hounds were leashed together in couples.

13. *foresters*. It was the duty of the foresters to go out in the night before a hunt and track the stag to his lair, whence he was roused in the early morning by the hunters.

29. *baulk*, stop.

ROSABELLE

This romantic ballad is taken from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. In the fifth canto of that poem there is a great meeting of Scotch and English chieftains in *Branksome Castle*. During the feast the minstrels, who have accompanied their lords, enter into a contest of song, and *Harold*, the bard of *St. Clair*, sings this pathetic story of the fate of a noble lady of his master's house.

LINE 5. These words, as far as line 16, are spoken by a ferryman, or pilot, on the northern shore of the *Firth of Forth*, the arm of the sea

which separates Edinburgh and the surrounding districts from the north of Scotland. He is trying to persuade Rosabelle and her company not to cross the Firth in view of the coming storm.

7. Ravensheuch, the raven's crag, a castle on the north shore of the Firth, belonging to the St. Clairs.

10. inch, island.

13. the gifted Seer. According to an old Scotch superstition, some people were supposed to have the gift of second sight, by which they foresaw future events. To see the image of a man or woman wrapped in a shroud was a sure sign of that person's approaching death.

17-24. These lines are spoken by Rosabelle.

17. Lindesay, the name of a noble Scotch family. The heir of this family was Rosabelle's lover.

18. Roslin, a famous castle now in ruins, a few miles south of Edinburgh, which belonged for centuries to the St. Clairs.

21. the ring they ride. This was a favorite sport of knights and gentlemen in the old days of tournaments. A ring was loosely suspended from a horizontal beam resting on two upright posts. The players rode at full speed through the archway thus made and tried to carry off the ring on their lance points. To do this required a firm seat, a true eye, and a steady hand.

29. castled rock. Roslin castle is built on a huge rock towering over a deep glen.

31. Dryden, an old castle near Roslin.

32. Hawthornden, another castle a mile or two below Roslin. The rock on which it is built is honeycombed with small caves.

33. that chapel. Roslin chapel, a little way from Roslin castle, is one of the most beautiful little churches in Great Britain. It is the burial place of the house of St. Clair.

34. uncoffin'd. It was an ancient custom in the house of St. Clair to array a dead baron in full armor and to lay him uncoffined in the family vault of Roslin chapel.

36. panoply, full suit of armor.

38. sacristy, that part of the church where the sacred vessels and robes are kept. — altar's pale, the part around the altar inclosed by the railing.

39. pillar. The pillars which support the roof of Roslin chapel are beautifully carved, as are the battlements and buttresses mentioned in the next stanza.

41. pinnet, a pinnacle.

50. candle . . . book . . . knell. The candles on the altar, the prayers for the dead read from the mass book, and the tolling of the bell mark the full ceremonies of a solemn funeral.

THE CAVALIER

This song, like that on page 181, is put in the mouth of Edmund, the minstrel in *Robbery*. The scene of that story is laid in England just after Cromwell's victory at Marston Moor had crushed the king's party in the north. It is sung to Matilda, a Cavalier lady, whose father and lover had been captured in that battle.

LINE 6. long flowing hair, the mark of the Cavalier, as the close-cropped hair was of the Puritan, or Roundhead.

13. Fairfax, Waller, two Puritan leaders.

17. Derby and Cavendish, two English nobles who fought for Charles I.

18. Erin, the poetic name for Ireland. — Ormond, the Royalist leader in Ireland. — Montrose, the great Cavalier general in Scotland.

19. Skippon, Massey, Brown, three subordinate Puritan commanders.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

England's greatness has for centuries depended upon the strength of her splendid navy. Never was this fact more clearly realized than in 1800, the year in which Campbell wrote this "naval ode." At that time England, in the midst of her long struggle against Napoleon, found herself suddenly confronted by an alliance of the northern powers, Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, who were determined to wrest from her the sovereignty of the seas. In view of this danger a strong fleet under the command of Parker and Nelson was dispatched to the Baltic to crush the forces of the allies before they could unite. Fired by the prospect of a tremendous struggle with Russia and her allies, Campbell composed this great ode in honor of England's naval glory. In accordance with his usual custom he altered and corrected the poem long after its first appearance. This accounts for the reference to Nelson's death in the second stanza.

LINE 15. Blake, Robert Blake, the great English admiral of Cromwell's day. He died at sea on his way back to England after a great victory over the Spanish at Santa Cruz. — Nelson, Horatio Nelson, the greatest of English naval heroes. He died in the moment of victory at Trafalgar, 1805, where he annihilated the combined French and Spanish fleets, and completely foiled Napoleon's plan for the invasion of England.

22. No towers along the steep. When Campbell wrote this poem the English government, in fear of a French invasion, was fortifying the southern coast of England with bomb-proof towers. Campbell believed that as long as the English fleet was supreme no coast defenses were needed.

31. The meteor flag, so called from its blood-red color.

BATTLE OF THE BALTIC

This battle, sometimes called the battle of Copenhagen, in which Nelson crushed the Danish fleet, was fought on April 2, 1801. Campbell, sailing back to England from Germany a month before the fight, had passed the Danish fleet and batteries, and, having seen their strength, was the more impressed by the news of Nelson's decisive victory.

8. the Prince. The Danish Crown Prince was not actually in command of the fleet, but he was in the shore batteries encouraging his people.

39. Ye are brothers! After several hours of furious fighting, Nelson, observing that the greater part of the Danish line was crushed, sent an officer bearing a flag of truce on shore with a letter addressed to "the brothers of Englishmen, the Danes." In this letter he said that he had orders to spare their fleet if it submitted; but that if it continued to resist, he would be obliged to destroy the ships which he had already silenced, without having the power of saving the brave Danes who defended them.

63. Elsinore, after Copenhagen, the most important of Danish towns. It is situated at the head of the sound in which the battle was fought.

67. Riou, a captain of one of the English ships, who was killed in the battle. He had greatly distinguished himself by his skill and bravery, and Nelson in his report lamented the loss of this "gallant and good" sailor.

70. condoles, laments them.

LORD BYRON

SONNET ON CHILLON

This sonnet was prefixed by Lord Byron to his narrative poem, the *Prisoner of Chillon*. Its proper place is really after the poem, since it embodies the emotions aroused in Byron's mind by the story of Bonnivard.

LINE 4 The heart which love of thee alone can bind. Only the love of liberty can constrain, or bind, her sons to any course of action or suffering. This line expresses both Byron's own proud and ungovernable temper, and his devotion to liberty.

11. The stone floor of the prison in Chillon is worn by the feet of prisoners. According to the story a track was worn in the pavement by Bonnivard as he paced up and down the length of the chain which bound him to his pillar.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

In June, 1816, Byron and Shelley made a tour of Lake Geneva in a sailboat. During their tour they were detained for two days by stress of weather at the little village of Ouchy, and during this time Byron composed the *Prisoner of Chillon*. When he wrote the poem he knew little or nothing of the story of Bonnivard, but he had been deeply impressed by the sight of the dungeons with their massive pillars and their stone flagging worn by the feet of wretched captives, and he used the scene as a setting for a romance. It is remarkable that he does not mention the name of Bonnivard in the poem. It occurs for the first time in *Sonnet on Chillon*, which is often prefixed to the poem, but was in fact written later.

Francois de Bonnivard, the most famous of the many prisoners who have been confined in the castle of Chillon, was a Roman Catholic, and consequently was not imprisoned on account of his religious belief. He took the side of the citizens of Geneva in their struggle for independence against the Duke of Savoy, and was in consequence seized by that ruler and imprisoned in Chillon, where he spent six years, the last four of them in the dungeon below the level of the lake. He was liberated by the Swiss allies of Geneva, who seized the castle in 1536.

The castle of Chillon is on the northern shore of Lake Geneva, almost at its eastern extremity. It is one of the most picturesque castles in the world, its cold white walls standing out against the green hills that rise behind it, and falling sheer into the bright blue waters of the lake.

The famous dungeon now shown to visitors is hardly so gloomy as Byron describes it. It is spacious and fairly well lighted, and the play of the waves which wash its walls is reflected on the vaulted roof. This roof is supported by seven or eight huge pillars, to one of which Bonnivard is said to have been chained. Prisoners of state were confined here as late as 1848.

LINE 10. banned, denied.

27. Gothic mold, mediæval architecture.

35. meteor lamp, the will-o' the-wisp.

57. the pure elements of earth, perhaps the light and fresh air.

66. of yore, of old, formerly.

71. Iought. The verb should be in the past tense, 'I was bound to do.'

91. below, below the skies, *i.e.*, in the world.

102. Those relics, the two brothers who were left of the family.

105. a gulf, an abyss of woe.

107. Lake Leman. Lemanus is the old Latin name of Lake Geneva.

108. "Below the castle, washing its walls, the lake has been fathomed to the depth of eight hundred feet, French measure" (Byron).

163. Why is this death called a murder, and why is the empty chain a fitting monument of such a murder?

191. What is meant by "a mockery of the tomb"?

208. admonishéd, warned of the truth.

229. faith, religion, which forbade suicide.

231-250. The simplicity, directness, and force of this passage show Byron at his best.

237. wist, the past tense of *to wit*, an old English verb meaning *to know*.

277. my dungeon's brink, the verge of the dungeon; here used for the window in which the bird sat.

339. the white-walled distant town, perhaps Bouveret, at the end of the lake.

341. a little isle. "Not far from Chillon is a very small island, the only one I could perceive in my voyages round and over the lake. It contains a few trees (I think not above three), and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view" (Byron).

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

This poem, one of the loveliest of Byron's lyrics, is the first of a little collection of songs called *Hebrew Melodies*, composed by Byron to be set to music. The idea is said to have been suggested by the sight of a beautiful lady dressed in deep mourning.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

Lord Byron spent the January of 1824, the last year of his life, in the swamps of Missolonghi, a situation to which, as he said, "the dykes of Holland when broken down are as the deserts of Arabia for dryness." He had come here to assist the Greeks in their struggle for independence, and was wholly devoted to their cause. "Others may do as they please," he said to a friend; "they may go, — but I stay here, *that is certain*." He had at times a presentiment that he should never leave Greece alive: "Either the Turks, or the Greeks, or the climate will prevent that," he said. On the morning of his last birthday he entered the room where several of his friends were gathered, and said, smiling, "You were complaining the other day that I never write any poetry now. This is my birthday, and I have just finished something which I think is better than what I usually write." He then produced the poem here printed. The fine contrast between the melancholy spirit of the first stanzas and the proud resolution of the closing lines is eminently characteristic of Byron in his last days, and the poem forms a fitting close for a wild and passionate but not wholly ignoble life.

LINES 19-20. Glory decks the hearse of the dead hero, and crowns the brow of the living with laurel.

23. The Spartan. In ancient Greece it was considered the greatest disgrace for a soldier to lose his shield. When the Spartans went out to fight, their mothers bade them return *with* their shields or *on* them.

27. Thy lifeblood tracks its parent lake. Byron calls to mind the memory of his noble and warlike ancestors.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Of the four lyrics from Shelley here printed this is the most impetuous in motion and the most magnificent in phrase. It is, in fact, one of the triumphant masterpieces of English lyric poetry.

Shelley's own note on the ode is as follows: "This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the

autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset, with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions."

LINE 6. *chariotest*, drivest as in a chariot.

9. *Thine azure sister of the spring*. The west wind that blows from the blue sky of spring is conceived as a gentle sister of the stormy winds of autumn.

21. *Mænad*, a Bacchante, one of the frenzied women worshipers of Bacchus. In this passage the approaching storm borne along on the surge of the wind is likened to a *mænad*.

31. *coil*, here used with the almost obsolete meaning of 'noise,' 'tumult.'

32. *Baiæ's bay*, a part of the Bay of Naples. The islands in this bay are largely composed of volcanic lava, or pumice. In the time of the Roman Empire there was a splendid city at Baiæ, a great part of which is now under water. This explains the reference, in lines 33-34, to the palaces and towers.

34. *Quivering within the wave's intenser day*, shimmering in the blue water. The water of the Bay of Naples is famous for its wonderful blue. Shelley calls it "an intenser day," that is, brighter than the sky itself.

60. *from both*, that is, from the forest and from the poet. Both are here thought of as lyres, or musical instruments, on which the wind may play.

70. At the time when this poem was written, in 1819, Europe was lying helpless under the tyranny of the allied sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and France. Shelley, a devoted lover of liberty, mourned over this state of things, and did all in his power to rouse the spirit of revolution. But he was at that time little read or regarded. Hence he speaks in line 63 of his "dead thoughts," that is, thoughts which cannot communicate the spirit of life and liberty to other minds. He does not, however, abandon hope that the day of liberty will dawn, and he prays the west wind to scatter his words among the enslaved nations, and to prophesy that the winter of tyranny will soon yield to the spring of freedom.

TO A SKYLARK

This is generally reckoned the most beautiful, as the *West Wind* is the most powerful, of Shelley's lyrics. It has been well called "an incomparable transfusion from notes into words of the spirit of a

skylark's song." It was written in Italy in 1820. Mrs. Shelley, in a note on the poems written at this time, says: "It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fireflies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems."

LINES 1-2. The keynote of the poem is struck in the opening lines. It is not so much an actual skylark that Shelley is addressing as the spirit of superhuman music that made its presence felt in the skylark's song.

15. Like an unbodied joy, like a happy spirit just set free from the prison of the body.

22. that silver sphere, the morning star.

48. un beholden, unseen. The glowworm itself is hidden among the flowers and grass, although at times its light flashes out.

55. heavy-wingéd thieves, the winds, laden with the perfume of the rose.

66. Chorus Hymeneal, a wedding song. Hymen is the god of marriage.

71. fountains, sources.

76. joyance, gayety, enjoyment.

95. Even if a man could forget his human passions and sorrows, Shelley thinks, he could not reach the pure joy of the skylark's song.

THE INDIAN SERENADE

This "divine little poem," as Browning called it, was written by Shelley in 1818 or 1819. During the last years of his life, Mrs. Williams, the wife of Lieutenant Williams, who was drowned with Shelley, used to sing it to an air which she had brought from India. A manuscript copy showing several changes from the form in which it was first printed was found in the volume of Keats recovered from Shelley's dead body.

LINE 11. champak, a sacred Indian tree, bearing golden-yellow, highly fragrant flowers.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Most of Shelley's lyrics remind us of his own line in *To a Skylark*,—

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

But this little poem shows him in his brightest and sunniest mood.

JOHN KEATS

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

LINE 1. Keats was at this time mourning the death of his brother, who had died of consumption a few months before the poem was written. His own health, also, was failing, and he followed his brother to the grave in about two years.

4. *Lethe-wards*, towards *Lethe*, which was, in ancient mythology, one of the rivers of *Hades*. It was said that whoever drank of its waters forgot the past.

7. *Dryad*. The *Dryads* were nymphs who were supposed to dwell in trees and to watch over them. Keats speaks of the nightingale as if it were one of these nymphs.

13. *Flora*, the goddess of flowers in ancient mythology.

14. *Provençal*. *Provence* is a district in southern France. It is a land of wines and flowers and song, and noted for its outdoor merrymaking. — *sun-burnt mirth*, mirth in the open air.

16. *Hippocrene*, one of the fountains of the *Muses* on *Mount Helicon* in Greece. Here it stands for wine.

31. *Away! away!* The poet puts aside wine as well as melancholy, and says he will go, in imagination, to the haunts of the nightingale, and there seek solace from the "fever" and "fret" of life.

32. *Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards*. In ancient mythology the chariot of *Bacchus*, the god of wine, was spoken of as drawn by leopards.

51. *Darkling*, in the dark.

66. *Ruth*. See the Book of *Ruth* in the Old Testament.

67. In the "alien" or foreign country to which *Ruth* went she gleaned wheat and barley (both of which are called corn in all European countries) in the fields of *Boaz*.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

LINE 1. the realms of gold, the fields of poetry and romance.

4. *Apollo*, the god of music and poetry in ancient mythology.

6. *demesne*, domain, territory.

7. *serene*. This word is here used as a noun. It means clearness and calmness.

8. Chapman, a poet and dramatist of Shakespeare's time who translated Homer.

10. ken, sight, vision.

11. Cortez. It was really Balboa, and not Cortez, who discovered the Pacific.

14. Darien, a district of Colombia, South America. It is a part of the isthmus which connects North and South America.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

Keats's intense love of nature shows itself on almost every page of his poetry. It is beauty that he sees first of all, but even the most minute and commonplace things have, in his eyes, interest and poetic charm. He does not, indeed, show for the grasshopper and the cricket that human affection which Burns felt for the mouse and the mountain daisy; he rather sympathizes with them as little poets who sing of the joys of life. To the mind of Keats "the poetry of earth is ceasing never."

ALFRED TENNYSON

MORTE D'ARTHUR

The title of this poem is taken from an old French romance, and means the death of Arthur. Arthur is the most famous of all the kings of mediæval legend, "the flower of kings," as an old chronicler calls him. He was supposed to be a king of the Britons, the first inhabitants of England, and to have fought and defeated the heathen Saxons who invaded his country. He gathered around him the noblest knights in the world, binding them to him by vows of purity and knightly obedience. But he was betrayed by his wife Guinevere, and by his dearest friend among the knights, Sir Lancelot of the Lake; and while absent from Britain in the attempt to punish Lancelot, his nephew Mordred raised a revolt against him in his own land. Arthur returned, drove the rebel army into the western extremity of the island, and there crushed it in a terrible battle. In this fight all of Arthur's knights but Sir Bedevere were killed, and he himself was mortally wounded by the traitor Mordred, whom he slew with his own hand.

It is at this point that Tennyson's poem begins. It was written in his early life, and was the first of his *Idylls of the King*, that is, stories of King Arthur, to appear.

LINE 2. **winter sea.** According to Tennyson this battle was fought in December, on the shortest day of the year.

3. **King Arthur's Table**, a name given to the company of knights that Arthur had gathered about him. The name was taken from the table at which they sat. It was circular in shape, so that no one knight might be said to sit above or below another.

4. **Lyonnesse**, a mythical country in Britain to the west of Cornwall, now supposed to be sunk in the sea.

12. **a great water, a lake.**

14. **The sequel of to-day**, the result of to-day's battle.

21. **Camelot**, the legendary capital of Arthur's kingdom, where the knights of the Round Table were accustomed to meet and hold their tournaments.

22. **this people which I made**, the Britons whom Arthur had saved from their enemies, but who had rebelled against him.

23. **Merlin**, the famous enchanter who befriended Arthur, and prophesied that he should not die, but only pass away to an unknown land, whence he should come again to rule his people.

27. **Excalibur**, the name of Arthur's famous sword. The story went that he received it from a fairy called the Lady of the Lake, and when he threw it away it was to be a sign that his reign was ended. So now Arthur, finding himself mortally wounded, orders his one remaining knight to throw the sword into the lake.

31. **samite**, a rich, silk fabric, interwoven with a gold or silver thread

57. **topaz**, a precious stone, usually of a light yellow color. — **jacinth**, a bluish-violet gem.

60. **dividing the swift mind**, hesitating, now deciding to throw away the sword and now to hide it.

61. **In act to throw**, in the very act of throwing.

73. **thy nature and thy name**, thy innate character and thy title of knight.

75. **fēalty**, the fidelity due to a king.

80. **lief**, beloved.

81. **lightly**, quickly.

86. **chased**, engraved.

94. **bond of rule**, the tie connecting a king and his subjects, which is broken by their disobedience.

99. **empty breath**, idle report.

100. **rumors of a doubt**, doubtful rumors or traditions.

102. **a joust of arms**, a tournament.

109. **much fame were lost**, much fame would be lost if the sword were thrown away.

110. clouded with his own conceit, blinded to his duty to the king by his own notion of keeping the sword.

125. offices, dutiful service.

139. the northern morn, the aurora borealis.

140. moving isles of winter, floating icebergs.

186. harness, armor.

193. hove, was waiting; from an old word, *hoven*, meaning to abide.

197. Black-stoled, black-robed.

198. Three Queens. According to the old story, one of these was Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay, a famous enchantress, the second the queen of North Wales, the third the queen of the Waste Lands.

199. the tingling stars, the stars that seemed to quiver in the frosty air.

215. greaves, armor for the lower part of the legs, shin pieces. — cuisses, armor for the thighs.

215-216. drops of onset, drops of blood from the battle.

218. dais-throne, the raised seat that served as Arthur's throne.

224. the lists, the inclosed space in which tournaments were fought.

232. the light, the Star of Bethlehem.

233. The holy Elders, the Wise Men of the East who came to worship the infant Jesus.

251. a blind life, blind to the higher world above the world of the senses, which alone is known to brutes.

259. Avilion, or Avalon, an enchanted island in the western sea. In the old legends Arthur was supposed to have been carried thither by the queens to be healed of his wound. In good time he was to come again to rule his people.

267. fluting a wild carol ere her death. This alludes to the old superstition that the swan sings a wonderfully sweet song just before its death.

ULYSSES

Ulysses, the wisest of all the Grecian chiefs who fought at the famous siege of Troy, was forced by the hate of angry gods to spend ten years in wandering and exile before he was allowed to return to his home. The story of his adventures is told in Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus being the Greek name for Ulysses. He reached his home at last, slew the haughty suitors of his wife Penelope, and settled down in his island kingdom. It had been foretold, however, that he should not remain there in quiet, but should wander once more, and at the last meet his death from the sea. No account of his later wanderings is given by Homer or by any of the Greek poets; but in the Middle Ages, Dante,

the famous Italian poet, told how Ulysses had sailed far into the western ocean and had been lost there with all his company. Before venturing out of the Mediterranean into the unknown ocean, Ulysses made his followers a speech reminding them of their past adventures and encouraging them to push on "to worlds unpeopled where the sunsets rest."

Tennyson took up this story of Dante's and enlarged the speech of Ulysses into the noble poem which is here given. It is a splendid embodiment of the spirit which disdains idleness and drives men on "to scorn delights and live laborious days."

LINE 2. **barren crags**, the crags of Ithaca, an island off the Grecian coast ruled by Ulysses.

3. **an aged wife**, Penelope.

4. **Unequal laws**, rough and ready justice. There was no fixed system of laws in Ithaca, but Ulysses administered justice as he saw fit.

10. **the rainy Hyades**, a group of stars. Their setting either at the evening or morning twilight, which happened late in April and November, was supposed to foretell stormy weather.

11. **become a name**, become famous.

17. **Troy**, a city on the coast of Asia Minor. Ulysses and the other Grecian heroes besieged it for ten years, and fought many battles with its warriors on the plains that lay between the city and the sea.

19. **experience is an arch**. Ulysses means that the experience gained in his past life is like a gateway through which he may pass into the unknown future.

26. **Little remains**, because Ulysses was already old and could not hope to live much longer.

29. **three suns**, three years, the possible extent of his life.

33. **Telemachus**, the son of Ulysses, is represented in the *Odyssey* as a loving son and a model young prince.

35. **discerning to fulfil**, knowing how to accomplish.

40. **decent**. The meaning here is suitable or fit.

53. **men that strove with gods**. In the battles before Troy the Grecians sometimes fought hand to hand with the gods that favored the Trojans.

60. **beyond the sunset**, to the most distant west.

60-61. **the baths of all the western stars**, the ocean into which the stars sank in the west.

62. **the gulfs**, the waves.

63. **the Happy Isles**. According to old Grecian legend a group of islands in the ocean beyond the straits of Gibraltar was the abode of

avored heroes, who passed thither after death to live a life of immortal happiness. These islands were often identified with the Elysian Fields, the abode of the blessed dead.

64. Achilles, the bravest of all the Grecian warriors in the Trojan War. According to a Grecian legend he passed after his death to the Elysian Fields.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

This splendid poem, "a war song and a sea song," celebrates the most heroic fight against the greatest odds ever fought by an English ship. In the year 1591 an English fleet of sixteen ships, only six of which were men-of-war, sailed to the Azores to intercept the Spanish treasure fleet which was returning from the West Indies. The Spanish got news of this, and dispatched a fleet of fifty-three ships from Spain to crush the English squadron and convey the treasure ships home in safety. The Spanish fleet took the English by surprise at Flores, one of the western islands of the Azores. Many of the English sailors were on shore procuring water or provisions, most of those on board were too ill to serve the guns, and the ships themselves were foul and scarcely able to carry sail for want of ballast. Under these circumstances Sir Thomas Howard, the admiral, gave the order to fly. Sir Richard Grenville, the vice admiral, as in duty bound, stayed till the last to bring on board his ship the sailors who were on the island. As he pushed out from shore he was intercepted by the Spaniards, and was compelled either to turn his back on them and run, which, it seems, was still possible, or to fight his way through their entire fleet. He chose the latter course, with the result told in Tennyson's poem.

Tennyson found the account of the battle partly in a pamphlet published at the time by Sir Walter Raleigh, Grenville's cousin, giving a true account of the fight, which the Spanish had been boasting of as a glorious victory, and partly in the diary of a Dutchman in the Spanish service, who was at that time staying in one of the Azores.

Sir Richard Grenville, the head of one of the oldest families in Cornwall, was a distinguished figure in the days of Elizabeth. He commanded a fleet of seven ships which sailed to plant the first English colony in Virginia, and during the fight with the Spanish Armada was in charge of the defense of Cornwall and Devon. He was famous even before his last fight in the Azores for his desperate courage. He once boarded a Spanish man-of-war from a hastily constructed raft, which fell

to pieces even as the Englishmen climbed over the Spaniard's side. His enemies called him a man of intolerable pride and insatiable ambition, and the Spanish told strange tales of his ferocity and savage habits. He used, they said, to take wine glasses between his teeth and crush them in pieces until the blood ran out of his mouth, swallowing down the fragments without the slightest harm.

The *Revenge* was one of the best ships of the English navy. Drake, the greatest of Elizabethan sailors, chose her to carry his flag in the fight against the Spanish Armada. But she was a notoriously unlucky ship, having run aground and capsized several times before she was finally lost. A sailor of that day called her "a ship loaden and full fraught with ill-success." But her final defeat was more glorious than many victories.

LINE 1. Flores is pronounced as two syllables. — Azores is here pronounced as three syllables.

2. *pinnacle*. This "pinnacle" did not belong to Sir Thomas Howard's fleet, but had been detached from an English squadron off the coast of Portugal to warn him of the approaching Spanish fleet.

3. *ships of war*. As a matter of fact, only about twenty of the Spanish ships were men-of-war; the others were victualing ships for the expected treasure fleet.

10. *ninety men*. Out of the *Revenge's* crew of two hundred, only about one half were fit for service.

12. *Inquisition dogs*, Sir Richard's name for the Spaniards. Of all things Spanish, the most hateful to Englishmen, then and afterwards, was the so-called Holy Inquisition, an organization whose business it was to detect and punish heresy, that is, any failure to accept in full the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. It was no uncommon thing for English merchants or prisoners to be seized by the Inquisition, tortured, and burned at the stake, unless they would renounce their own religion.

17. *Bideford*, a seaport town in Devon, and at that time one of the chief ports in England. It is a word of three syllables.

21. *for the glory of the Lord*. The Inquisition professed to detect and punish heretics for the glory of God.

24. *sea-castles*, the Spanish ships, so called because they were built up like castles at the stern and bow. — *weather bow*, off the bow to windward.

28. According to one report the sailing master of the *Revenge* ordered the mainsail to be shaken out so that the ship might run away from the

Spaniards; but Grenville stopped him, and swore that he would hang any man who touched it.

30. Seville, a town in the southwest of Spain. The squadron of Seville was in the van of the Spanish fleet.

37. Thousands of their soldiers. According to the Spanish custom their ships were crowded with soldiers. The Spanish method of naval warfare at this time was, wherever possible, to grapple the enemy's ship and board her.

40. *San Philip*, one of the finest ships of the Spanish navy, of fifteen hundred tons burden, and carrying over seventy guns. The *Revenge* was only of five hundred tons burden, with from thirty to forty guns.

42. Took the breath from our sails. The huge *San Philip*, coming up on the windward side of the *Revenge*, intercepted the wind and so stopped her.

46. galleons, Spanish men-of-war.

50. Raleigh's words are: "But the great *San Philip* having received the lower tier of the *Revenge*, discharged with cross-bar shot, shifted herself with all diligence from her sides, utterly misliking her first entertainment. Some say that the ship (the *San Philip*) foundered, but we cannot report it for truth."

51. her womb, her hold, the inside of the ship. Tennyson took the expression from a contemporary poem on the fight.

58. Ship after ship. Between three in the afternoon, when the fight began, and daybreak next morning, fifteen different Spanish ships attempted to carry the *Revenge* by boarding, but all in vain. Some of the Spanish ships had two hundred, some five hundred, some eight hundred soldiers on board, in addition to their crews, while the *Revenge* had only her crew of one hundred men and a few gentlemen volunteers.

61. some were sunk. Two Spanish ships sank alongside of the *Revenge*; one ran for the nearest harbor and sank there, and a fourth was beached to save her crew. In all about two thousand Spaniards were lost.

83-90. Sir Richard's speech is taken almost verbatim from Raleigh's account.

91. The master gunner readily agreed to sink the ship, but the captain and others preferred to make terms with the Spaniards. Besides the reasons that Tennyson mentions in this stanza, they asserted that the *Revenge* was so battered that the Spaniards could never take her to Spain as a trophy of victory, but that she would certainly go to the bottom with the first rough weather.

96. the lion, Grenville.

97. The Spanish promised that the lives of the remaining sailors on the *Revenge* should be spared, the common men to be sent back to England, and the gentlemen to pay a reasonable ransom without being put into prison. When these terms were brought to the *Revenge* the master gunner tried to kill himself rather than surrender. Sir Richard was too weak from loss of blood to control his crew, and so the ship was yielded. Sir Richard was carried on board the Spanish flagship, where the Spanish admiral, in Raleigh's words, "used him with all humanity and left nothing unattempted that tended to his recovery, highly commending his valour and worthiness, and greatly bewailed the danger wherein he was."

Sir Richard died on the second or third day after the fight, and was buried at sea. His dying speech is not given by Raleigh, but another account of the battle says: "Feeling the hour of death to approach he spake these words in Spanish and said: Here die I, Richard Greenfield (another spelling for Grenville), with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion, and honour, whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it the everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do."

108. devil or man. The Spaniards said that "as Sir Richard had a devilish faith and religion that therefore the devils loved him, so he sunk into the bottom of the sea and down into Hell, where he raised up all the devils to the revenge of his death."

110. swarthier alien crew, a crew of dark-faced Spaniards.

111. her loss, her sorrow for her loss. In Tennyson's imagination the ship herself mourns over her capture and longs for her old English crew.

112. the lands they had ruin'd, the West Indies and South America, which had been conquered and plundered by the Spanish. The storm here spoken of was evidently a West Indian cyclone; it blew for seven or eight days continually, and it seemed to an eyewitness as if the sea would swallow up the islands. Not only the *Revenge*, but over two-thirds of the Spanish fleet were lost in this storm.

114. that evening, not the evening of the day on which the *Revenge* surrendered, although Tennyson seems to say so here.

118. the island crags, the rocky Azores.

TO THE QUEEN

Tennyson was not merely the Poet Laureate under Victoria; he was in a peculiar sense the poet of the queen. He was appointed to the position because of her husband's admiration for his poem, *In Memoriam*, and he wrote some beautiful verses in memory of her husband's death, and many songs to celebrate marriages and other events in the royal family. The relations between the sovereign and the poet were marked on the one hand by a gracious kindness, and on the other by a fine sense of old-world loyalty. "Dear and Honored Lady, My Queen," was the style in which Tennyson addressed Queen Victoria, and he signed himself, "Your loyal and affectionate servant." The poem here printed is chosen as embodying the temperate yet profound loyalty which was a distinguishing characteristic of the English subjects of the great and good queen.

LINE 6. less desert, of less merit than the former wearer of the laurel, Wordsworth, who was Tennyson's predecessor as Poet Laureate. Wordsworth is referred to in line 8.

17. this poor book. This poem was prefixed to an edition of Tennyson's poems which appeared the year after he had been appointed Poet Laureate.

32. The bounds of freedom wider. The phrase refers, perhaps, to the gradual extension of the suffrage during Victoria's reign.

36. inviolate sea, the sea which serves as a defense for England, and which none of her enemies has crossed to invade her land since the Norman Conquest.

COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD

This morning song of youth and love is put by Tennyson into the mouth of the hero of his long poem, *Maud*. The hero and Maud are in love, but their affection is not recognized by her family, and he is not invited to a grand political dinner, followed by a dance, given at the Hall where she lives. However, he makes an appointment to meet her in the rose garden when the dancing is over. This song, then, expresses his mood while waiting for Maud among the flowers in the dawning light of a summer morning.

LINE 5. woodbine spices, the fragrance of the honeysuckle.

8. the planet of Love, Venus, the morning star.

29. young lord-lover, a young lord whom Maud's family wished her to marry.

38. Our wood, the wood where the lovers used to meet.

44. the valleys of Paradise, the "woody hollows" mentioned in the line above. The hero had been so happy there that they seemed like paradise to him.

45. acacia, the English word for our locust tree.

48. pimpernel, a red flower of the primrose family.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

This is one of the most famous of Tennyson's many beautiful lyrics. It was written in the first outburst of his grief for the loss of his dear friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, for whom he afterwards wrote his long poem, *In Memoriam*. Tennyson's son tells us that this song was made in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges. There is, however, nothing of the joy of a spring morning in the poem; it is a sea song, and sets the grief which then filled the poet's heart to the mournful music of the waves on a rocky shore.

CROSSING THE BAR

"*Crossing the Bar*," says Tennyson's son and biographer, "was written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October when we came from Aldworth (Tennyson's house in the Surrey hills) to Farringford (his house in the Isle of Wight). Before reaching Farringford, he had the Moaning of the Bar in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out.

"I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It came in a moment.' He explained the 'Pilot' as 'That Divine and Unseen who is always guiding us.'

"A few days before my father's death, he said to me: 'Mind you put *Crossing the Bar* at the end of all editions of my poems.'"

ROBERT BROWNING

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM
GHENT TO AIX

There is, as Browning himself said, no sort of historical foundation for this poem. "I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse, York, then in my stable at home." Ghent and Aix are two towns in the Low Countries, where the scene of the poem is laid during one of the long wars that harassed that land. Three horsemen start from Ghent at midnight on a ninety mile ride to Aix, bearing a message, perhaps the news of a treaty of peace, which alone can save that city from destruction.

LINES 1-2. Joris and Dirck are the companions of the rider who tells the story.

10. pique, the peak, or pommel, of the saddle.

12. Roland. Roland, the most famous of Charlemagne's heroes, became during the Middle Ages the symbol of liberty and free government in the towns of Germany and the Netherlands. There is thus a special significance in the name of the horse which is celebrated in this poem.

14. Lokeren and the other towns mentioned in this stanza are on the road between Ghent and Aix.

31. Hasselt, about eighty miles from Ghent.

32. Roos, the name of Dirck's horse.

41. a dome-spire, the tower of the great cathedral at Aix, where Charlemagne is buried.

59. the burgesses, the citizens of Aix.

THE LOST LEADER

This poem was suggested to Browning by his acquaintance with Wordsworth. This great man had been in his youth a sympathizer with the French Revolutionists, and a poet of democratic principles. But as he grew older he changed his views, until at last he became a very narrow and rather bigoted conservative, opposing nearly all the reforms for which the liberal party in England was working. It is not fair, however, to say that the "lost leader" of the poem is Wordsworth himself.

Browning was once asked about this matter, and replied that he had used "the great and venerable personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model, one from whom this or the other feature may be selected." If he had meant to paint a portrait of Wordsworth, he said, he would not have talked about handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon, for these never influenced the change of politics on the part of the great poet.

LINE 2. *riband*, ribbon, worn to indicate title or rank.

3. *the one gift*, worldly wealth and position.

5. They, with the gold, the rich and powerful aristocrats to whose party he had gone over.

8. If the rags, which we would have been glad to share with him, had been purple, the sign of worldly honor, he would have been proud of us.

13. Shakespeare and the other poets here mentioned belonged to the party of progress and freedom.

20. 'Those' is understood before "whom." It refers to the common people whom the lost leader, after his change of parties, advised to crouch, that is, to submit quietly to their masters.

MY LAST DUCHESS

This is one of the earliest and simplest specimens of a form of poetry in which Browning did some of his very best work. It is called a dramatic monologue. This means that it is a speech put in the mouth of one man and addressed to some companion, who, though silent, hears and sometimes influences the speaker. It is dramatic, because its purpose is not merely to tell a story, but to reveal, both by what it says and what it leaves unsaid, the character of the speaker.

In this poem the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara, an Italian town; the time is that of the Renaissance in Italy. The duke is speaking to the ambassador of a neighboring count about his proposed marriage with the latter's daughter. In the course of the conversation the duke shows the ambassador the portrait of his last duchess, and then begins his speech, which tells how he broke the heart of a gentle, loving lady, and at the same time reveals his own cold, proud, and selfish nature.

LINE 3. *Frà Pandolf*, an imaginary artist. *Frà* is the Italian for 'brother.' It is used here to denote a monk. The artist is supposed to have been a monkish painter like *Fra Angelico*. It is worth noting that the duke has all a connoisseur's appreciation of a beautiful picture, but not a trace of remorse for the dead woman.

6. *by design*. There is so much deep passion in the portrait that it seems as if the painter must have been a lover of the lady and so divined the secret of her heart. But the duke assures his guest that the picture was painted by Frà Pandolf, a monk whose character was above reproach.

10. *The curtain*. The duke keeps the portrait veiled, not out of respect for the lady's memory, but because it is too fine a piece of art to be exposed to the vulgar gaze.

16-19. In these words of the artist we get a hint of the lady's beauty of form and coloring.

25. *My favor*, some rich jewel which the duke had given her.

33. *nine-hundred-years-old name*. The duke was inordinately proud of his long descent, and was angry that his wife was not sufficiently thankful for the honor he had done her in bestowing his name upon her.

40. *be lessoned*, be taught.

45. *I gave commands*. Some commentators have thought that this means that the duke ordered his wife to be killed; but more probably it only means that he rebuked her for her lack of pride, and ordered her to change her manners. His rebuke was so stern and his request so impossible for the gentle lady to obey, that she never smiled again, but pined away and died.

54-55. As the duke and his guest go down the stairs together, the duke prints out a fountain in the courtyard representing Neptune taming a sea horse. There is, perhaps, a reference in this to the way in which he had tamed and broken his lady.

56. *Claus*, like Frà Pandolf, is an imaginary artist. — *Innsbruck*, a town in Germany, famous among other things for the splendid bronze statues in its court church.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

This little poem is perhaps the best representation in English literature of that spirit of military devotion to a great leader which made Napoleon's soldiers proud to die for him. The story is supposed to be told by an old French soldier.

LINE 1. *Ratisbon*, a town in Bavaria, stormed by Napoleon in 1809, during a war with Austria.

7. *prone brow*, the forehead bent toward the ground in thought.

11. *Lannes*, one of the bravest of Napoleon's generals. He was killed a little later in this same campaign.

27. *The Marshal*, Lannes, who led the storming party.

29. flag-bird. The Roman military standard with the figure of an eagle was adopted by Napoleon as the ensign of France. — *his vans*, his wings.

BOOT AND SADDLE

This is one of a group of poems called *Cavalier Tunes*. Browning was at heart a liberal, if not a republican poet, but his dramatic sympathy with all sorts and conditions of men enabled him to express the loyalty, gayety, and reckless courage of the Cavaliers better than any poet of his day. The scene of this poem is laid in England during the civil war between the king and the Parliament. A detachment of cavalry is starting from a royalist garrison to raise the siege of Castle Brancepeth, which is held for the king by Lady Gertrude, the wife of one of the leaders of the party. The castle and the lady are both imaginary. It was, however, no uncommon thing at that time for a lady to defend her castle against the Roundheads while her husband was absent with the king's army.

From PIPPA PASSES

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

This perfect little song is taken from one of Browning's earlier dramas. Pippa is a little Italian silk spinner, who spends her one holiday of the year roaming through the little town of Asolo and singing to herself. Her innocent songs, overheard by the various characters in the drama at the most critical moment of their lives, have a strange and powerful influence upon their careers.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

A merman is the male counterpart of the more familiar mermaid, — a sea man, as his name shows, or rather a sea monster, with the head and body of a man and the tail of a fish. It was an old superstition that a mermaid had no soul, but could acquire one by marrying a man. In this poem Arnold reverses the superstition and tells of a woman who had married a merman, but fearing to lose her soul through this unhallowed union, had left him and returned to her own people.

The Forgiven Merman is one of the most charming of Arnold's poems. It is not so smoothly finished nor so nobly meditative as some of his great elegies, but it is the most imaginative poem that he ever wrote. It has already become a classic, famous for the beauty and clearness of the pictures it embodies, for the haunting music of its rhythm, and for its wild but strangely human pathos.

LINE 1. Come, dear children. The merman is speaking to the children whom their mother, the Margaret mentioned in line 13, has deserted. He has risen with them from their home at the bottom of the sea to the edge of the land, and they have been calling in vain on their mother to return.

6. the wild white horses, the white breakers of the surf.

25. the white-wall'd town, the town to which Margaret has returned.

69. sea-stocks. The great sea stock is a flower that blooms on the sandy coasts of Wales and Cornwall. It is very fragrant in the cool of the evening.

91. the holy well. The little town to which Margaret returned is supposed to have possessed a certain well, or spring, to which miraculous properties were attributed.

118-119. While storms are raging on the surface, the merman's home at the bottom of the sea is undisturbed.

RUGBY CHAPEL

This is an elegy written in memory of Arnold's father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous Head Master of Rugby School, known to thousands of boys on both sides of the Atlantic as "the Doctor" of *Tom Brown's School Days*. Dr. Arnold was a man of sterling character, a scholar, a gentleman, and a sincere Christian. When he was a candidate for the position of Head Master of Rugby, one of his friends said that if he were elected he would change the face of education all through the public schools of England, and it is not too much to say that he made his friend's words good. After fourteen years of service at Rugby he died suddenly of heart disease and was buried in Rugby Chapel.

Matthew Arnold was a student at college when his father died; this poem was not written until fifteen years later.

REQUIESCAT

Arnold is not generally considered one of the great lyric poets of the Victorian age, but a number of his best poems are marked by the presence of what he himself called the "lyrical cry." This little poem, combining tenderness and solemn pathos in verse of a flawless perfection, shows Arnold at his very best as a lyric poet.

The title is a Latin word meaning 'may he rest.' It is frequently carved upon gravestones. Arnold uses it here to express his wish for the dead woman who is the subject of the poem.

A VICTORIAN MISCELLANY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864)

Landor is the link between the poets who lived during the time of the French Revolution and the poets of the Victorian era. He began life as a contemporary of Wordsworth and Byron; he died at the age of eighty-nine, the friend of Browning and Swinburne. Landor was a devoted student of the classics and wrote Latin verse as easily and almost as well as he did English.

TWENTY YEARS HENCE

This song, like the following elegy, is a typical example of Landor's grace and perfection of style as a lyric poet.

ROSE AYLMER

This perfect little elegy, "carved as it were in ivory or in gems," was written by Landor in memory of a dear friend of his youth who died in India.

MACAULAY

Landor wrote these spirited verses on the appearance of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. Leigh Hunt told Macaulay that the lays wanted "the true poetical aroma that breathes from the *Faerie Queene*"; but Landor had a wider conception of poetry and rejoiced in the vigor and martial music of his young contemporary's verse.

LINE 4. The dear delights of womankind, the dainty heroes of romance dear to the hearts of women.

8. truss'd and skewer'd a Turk, killed a villain as neatly as a cook would dress a fowl for dinner.

15. all the Tuscans and their Lars. The reference is to the first of Macaulay's lays, *Horatius at the Bridge*. This poem tells how the Tuscans, led by their chief, Lars Porsena, attacked Rome, but were kept from entering by Horatius and his two comrades, who held the narrow way across the bridge over the Tiber.

16. the towers of Mars, the towers of Rome. Mars, the god of war, was supposed to be the father of Romulus, the founder of Rome.

ROBERT BROWNING

This fine and hearty burst of praise appeared at a time when Browning was utterly neglected by the English public. Browning was naturally much pleased with the verses and showed his gratitude by dedicating his next work to "a great dramatic poet, Walter Savage Landor." In Landor's old age, when he was turned out of doors by his family, Browning received him and did all in his power to make his last days serene and free from care.

The last lines of this poem seem to refer to Browning's intention of coming to live in Italy. He came there in the following year with his wife, and Landor's prophecy that the warmer climate would give him "brighter plumage" and "stronger wing" was more than fulfilled by the noble poems that Browning wrote during his stay in that country.

LINE 13. Sorrento and Amalfi are two beautiful towns in southern Italy, the first on the bay of Naples, the second on the neighboring gulf of Salerno. Near the mouth of the bay are the islands where the sirens of Greek mythology were supposed to have their home, and where they drew mariners on the rocks by their sweet singing.

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER (1787-1874)

Bryan Waller Procter, better known as Barry Cornwall, was one of the most voluminous of the poets who had already won distinction when the reign of Victoria began. He wrote dramas, narrative poems, and a great number of lyrics. It is by these last alone that he is now remembered. He was so little of a sailor that he never even crossed the English Channel, but his best songs are about the sea.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-1859)

Macaulay ranks much higher as an essayist and historian than as a poet. Indeed, some critics are inclined to deny him this title altogether. But the long continued admiration of generations of high-spirited boys pleads strongly in his favor, and against the adverse opinion of certain critics we may set the judgment of Landor, expressed in the poem printed on page 270, and the words of Mrs. Browning, who declared that "his noble, clear, metallic note makes us ready for battle." Perhaps his best poem is *Horatius at the Bridge* in the *Lays of Ancient Rome*; but the less-known poem here given expresses quite as strongly that joy of combat for the right which was the chief note of Macaulay's poetry, as it was of his life.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY

The battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, was the decisive contest of the civil war between Charles I and the Parliament. It was fiercely fought, but at last the king was put to flight; all his guns and five thousand prisoners were taken, and the royal cause received a crushing and irremediable blow. The victory was chiefly due to the generalship of Oliver Cromwell and to the valor of his Ironsides.

This poem is supposed to be written by a soldier in the regiment of Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, who commanded the left wing of the Roundheads. The extraordinary name of the supposed poet is invented by Macaulay in imitation of the long biblical names which the extreme Puritans used to give their children.

LINE 1. *from the north.* The battle of Naseby was fought in the center of England, but the question is supposed to be put by a London citizen to the victorious army on their return to London in the south.

5. The soldier who is supposed to have written the poem answers for the army, and his answer fills the rest of the poem.

11. *the Man of Blood*, a name given by the Puritans to Charles I, whom they considered guilty of all the bloodshed of the war.

12. *Astley*, Sir Jacob Astley, a veteran Cavalier, commander of the royal artillery. — *Sir Marmaduke*, Marmaduke Langdale, a noted cavalry leader of the royal army. — *Rupert of the Rhine*, Prince Rupert, the most famous of the king's generals and a dashing cavalry leader. He was a nephew of Charles, being the son of his sister Elizabeth and her husband Frederick, of the Palatinate. Frederick's dominions lay along the Rhine in Germany, whence Rupert took his title.

14. The general, Sir Thomas Fairfax, who commanded the Puritan army at Naseby.

16. the tyrant's right. Rupert commanded the royal cavalry on the right wing of the army, and opened the battle by a furious charge which swept away the part of the Puritan army opposed to him.

21. The furious German, Prince Rupert.

22. Alsatia, a district in London, occupied for the most part by criminals and disorderly characters. Many of them enlisted in the king's army on the outbreak of the war. — Whitehall, the king's palace in London.

29. Skippon, a Puritan leader, commanding a body of infantry at Naseby.

32. Oliver, Oliver Cromwell, who commanded a body of cavalry on the right wing of his army at Naseby. Like Rupert, he routed the force opposed to him. But instead of wasting his energies in pursuit and plunder, he re-formed his troops and hurled them on the disorganized cavalry of Rupert, and then on the center of the royal army. This charge decided the day.

35. the Accurst, King Charles I.

38. Temple Bar. Near the Temple, the old dwelling place of the Knights Templars in London, a barrier across the street separated the city of London proper from Westminster and the outlying districts. The top of this barrier was often adorned with the severed heads of traitors. After the overthrow of the king many Cavaliers who attempted to renew the war were beheaded as traitors to the country by the victorious Puritans.

46. lemans, sweethearts.

51. catches, songs. The Puritans thought that all songs except hymns were profane.

54. Belial, the personification of licentiousness. — Mammon, the personification of wealth.

55. Oxford halls, the colleges of the University of Oxford. During the civil war Oxford was the royal capital. — Durham's stalls, the carved chairs in the cathedral of Durham, a royalist city in the north of England.

56. The Jesuit, the members of the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus, who were supposed by the Puritans to be greatly interested in the success of Charles. — the bishop rends his cope. One of the points over which Charles quarreled with his Parliament was the government of the Church of England. He supported the old rule of the bishops; the Puritans, on the other hand, wished to see a more democratic form

of government introduced. So a bishop is here represented as rending his priestly garment in grief at the news of the king's defeat.

57. *She of the seven hills*, the city of Rome, which is built upon seven little hills. Here the reference is to the Roman Catholic Church. King Charles's wife was a Catholic, and he was suspected, though quite unjustly, of favoring that church.

60. *the Houses*, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. — *the Word*, the Bible.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

Elizabeth Barrett began to write verses when a girl of eight. At the time of her marriage to Robert Browning she was better known and far more popular in England than he. A great part of her early life was spent in a sick room, and though she was an indefatigable student and a prolific writer, she looked forward to nothing better than a lonely life and an early death. From this state she was rescued by the devotion of her poet husband. She has immortalized their love in one of the most beautiful of all sonnet-cycles, the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. After her marriage she lived for the most part in Italy, where she took a passionate interest in the redemption of the country from foreign tyranny and in its union under a native king. She died in Florence in 1861, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery of that city.

From SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

I

Mrs. Browning wrote *Sonnets from the Portuguese* during the course of her courtship. They were not meant for publication; for a long time she did not even show them to her lover, but one day, some months after their marriage, she came behind him, thrust a parcel of papers into his pocket, and bidding him read that and tear it up if he did not like it, ran away to her room. With pardonable pride Browning persuaded his wife to permit them to be published. "I dared not," he said, "reserve to myself the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare's."

Before her marriage Mrs. Browning had written a poem called *Catarina to Camoens*, supposed to be the dying message of a Portuguese girl to her poet lover. It was with this poem in his mind that Browning suggested the name which the sonnets bear at present, a name which in part at least concealed the personal element contained in them.

The sonnet here printed is the first of the series. It introduces us to the struggle between the gloomy forebodings of death and the rapturous joy of love through which her heart was to pass before she consented to become his wife.

LINE 1. *Theocritus*, an old Greek poet.

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

LINE 1. *Pan*, the mysterious god of the Greeks, in shape half human, half goatish, was supposed to be the inventor of the shepherd's pipe. According to the old legend, a nymph whom he pursued was changed into a reed growing in the river. To console himself for her loss *Pan* cut the reed and made from it a musical instrument called "*Pan's pipe*."

39. *Making a poet out of a man*. This line expresses the symbolic meaning of the poem: just as the reed could become a musical instrument only by being cut and trimmed and notched, so a man can become a poet only by bitter suffering.

MOTHER AND POET

This pathetic poem, one of the best of those in which Mrs. Browning celebrated the liberation of Italy, can only be understood by a reference to the history of the time. In 1860 *Garibaldi*, the great Italian patriot, headed a revolt which drove the Bourbon king of Naples to the fortress of *Gaeta*. Here the king was besieged by *Garibaldi* and by *Victor Emmanuel*, the king of northern Italy. *Gaeta* surrendered after a few months, and *Victor Emmanuel* became king of all Italy except *Venice* and *Rome*, which remained in the power of *Austria* and the *Pope* respectively.

LINE 31. *moil'd*, moistened.

35. *laurel-bough*. The laurel is the emblem of victory.

36. *Turin*, *Victor Emmanuel's* capital in northern Italy. — *Ancona*, a fortress on the Adriatic, which *Victor Emmanuel* had taken from the *Pope*.

49. *Viva l'Italia!* "Long live Italy!" the war cry of the Italians who were attempting to unite the country under a national king.

77. the fair wicked queen, the wife of the king of Naples, who encouraged him to resist the Italian troops at *Gaeta*.

79. *Cavalli*, an Italian general in the service of *Victor Emmanuel*, famous as the inventor of a breech-loading rifled cannon.

82. white, green, and red, the national colors of Italy.

90. *disfranchise despair*, cast out, or banish, despair.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

Thackeray, one of the greatest of all English novelists, is at the same time one of the most charming of Victorian minor poets. In his poems, as in his novels, there is a mingled strain of humor and sentiment, passing from the broad fun of his dialect verses to the tender pathos of the *End of the Play*. This poem, originally the epilogue to one of Thackeray's Christmas books, is perhaps the finest expression of the worldly-wise, but kindly, philosophy of the tender-hearted satirist.

THE END OF THE PLAY

LINE 19. **The triumphs and defeats of boys.** The little book in which this poem first appeared, *Dr. Birch and his Young Friends*, was a series of sketches of English school life.

43. **Charles,** Charles Buller, a brilliant young friend of Thackeray, who had died some years before the appearance of this poem, on the very threshold, as it seemed, of a distinguished career.

53. **Dives,** the rich man of Christ's parable. The names, Dives and Lazarus, are here used for the typical careless rich man and his poor neighbor.

CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-1875)

Kingsley, like Thackeray, is perhaps better known as a novelist than as a poet. Yet two at least of his songs, *The Three Fishers* and *The Sands of Dee*, are familiar wherever the English language is spoken. The two specimens of his verse given here show his power as a writer of ballads and of songs. Both have the true human pathos which marks all his best work in prose and verse.

THE LAST BUCCANEER

The buccaneers were a band of adventurers who flourished in the West Indies during the seventeenth century. They were at first half hunters, taking their name from the rack (*boucan*) on which they dried the meat of cattle and other animals, and half smugglers, carrying on a forbidden trade with the closed ports of the Spanish main. Later on they became open pirates, seizing many Spanish ships in the Caribbean Sea, storming strong cities on the mainland, and even crossing the

Isthmus of Panama to harry the Pacific coast. They were for the most part French and English. Their power gradually declined toward the close of the century, when England made peace with Spain and entered on a long series of wars with France. The poem is otherwise without historical foundation.

LINE 4. *Avés*. There is a little barren island of this name in the Caribbean Sea, but it does not appear to have been inhabited by the buccaneers. Their chief rendezvous was the island of Tortuga.

6. *small arms, muskets*.

7. *laws so fair and free*. The buccaneers were in effect a little republic, living under their own laws and choosing their own leaders.

9. *plate*, a piece of silver money, such as the Spaniards sent home in enormous quantities from the mines of Mexico and South America.

12. *keel-haul*. The word means to haul a man through the water under a ship's keel from one side of the ship to the other, a cruel punishment once in vogue in various navies.

14. *colibris*, humming birds, such as abound in the West Indies.

15. *negro maids*, runaway slaves from the Spanish colonies.

18. *a net, a hammock*.

22. *the King's ships*. As the last buccaneer is an Englishman, one would suppose that the reference was to the English navy. But there is no record of an English fleet attacking the buccaneers. On the contrary, the English often received aid in their wars against Spain from the buccaneers.

23. *the booms, chains of logs bound together and stretched across the mouth of the harbor to prevent the hostile ships from entering*.

24. *piragua*, a dugout.

27. *Bristol*, a town in the west of England. During the seventeenth century it was the chief port for American trade with England.

GEORGE WALTER THORNBURY (1828-1876)

Thornbury, one of the minor poets of the Victorian era, is best known as the author of several stirring ballads. The best of these deal with scenes from the war between Charles I and the Parliament, or with the Jacobite plots and rebellions of the seventeenth century. None of them are poems of the first rank, but they have a spirit and dash that will long keep them from entire oblivion.

THE THREE TROOPERS

The scene is laid during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell (1653-1658). Although the genius of the great Protector caused the name of England to be dreaded by her foreign enemies, the country was constantly disturbed by plots for the restoration of the exiled Stuarts. The three troopers of this poem are supposed to be concerned in one of these plots.

LINE 1. the Devil tavern, a famous old inn in London, close to Temple Bar. Ben Jonson and his friends often met here.

5. At a time when it was high treason to attack the name or the person of Cromwell, his enemies used to drop a bit of bread in their glasses and drink the toast, "God send this crumb well down!" a punning curse on the Protector's name.

11. jerkins of buff, short coats made of yellow leather.

14. curs'd old London town. The troopers cursed London because it was a stronghold of Puritanism.

18. a clout, a rag.

37. stirrup cups, cups drunk before mounting to depart.

41. Temple Bar, the barrier which used to separate London proper from Westminster.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882)

Rossetti is one of the most interesting and important figures in the history of Victorian poetry. A painter of rare and original power, as well as a unique and subtle poet, he exerted an unparalleled influence over contemporary art. But it is difficult, if not impossible, to do him justice in such a collection as this; for the chief characteristic of Rossetti's poetry is its manner of expressing ideal conceptions in sensuous terms. In some few of his poems, indeed, he addresses a larger public, and tells directly and forcibly a simple and pathetic story. But his ballads are too long for insertion in this miscellany, and the mystic and subtle charm of his songs and sonnets appeals to a limited audience. The sonnet here given may serve, at least, as a characteristic example of his poetic art. It illustrates, also, Rossetti's not infrequent practice of writing verses to accompany his own pictures.

MARY MAGDALENE

AT THE DOOR OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

The first eight lines of the sonnet are spoken by Mary's lover, the last six by the Magdalene herself.

ALAS, SO LONG!

This little song shows Rossetti's lyrical note and the dreamy melancholy that pervades so many of his poems.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

Morris was closely connected with the chief figures in the great revival of art in England in the middle of the last century. He was a pupil of Rossetti and an intimate friend of the great painter, Burne-Jones. He dedicated his first volume of verse to Rossetti, whose influence over his early life and thought was for a time supreme. The poems of his later years show him as one of the greatest masters of narrative verse since Chaucer. Morris, like Rossetti, cannot be adequately represented in this collection; for his early poems are for the most part not of a type to appeal to the general reader, and the more popular stories of the *Earthly Paradise* are too long to be printed here. The poem given here may serve as an example of Morris's love of the old romantic themes of chivalry.

RIDING TOGETHER

LINE 4. our Lady's feast, the festival of the Annunciation in March.

16. bream, a kind of fish.

18. the rood, the cross. The knights of this poem, if not crusaders, are at least on an expedition against the infidels, perhaps against the Moors of Spain.

48. cymbals. The cymbals were the distinguishing feature of Oriental, particularly of Moorish or Saracen, music.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-)

Swinburne, the greatest of English living poets, completes, with Rossetti and Morris, the trio of the aesthetic school that in the third quarter of the last century brought a new music and a new beauty into English verse. Like Morris, he began as a disciple of Rossetti, to

whom he dedicated his first published work. But he has been a far more prolific and versatile poet than his master. He has published over twenty volumes of plays and poems, and perhaps a dozen more of critical essays. Some of his poems handle repellent and morbid themes in such an outspoken fashion as to call down on him the wrath of the moralist; but all these poems could be omitted from his work, and his fame as a poet of children, of the sea, and of liberty would be none the less. Nor can the most rigid of moralists deny to Swinburne an almost unequalled mastery of English meter. In his hands the most difficult measures are but playthings, and he delights in forcing the stubborn English language to flow along unwonted channels.

From ATALANTA IN CALYDON

Atalanta in Calydon is a play in imitation of the old Greek dramas. It is perhaps the most successful of all such attempts to render into English something of the power and beauty of a Greek play. It is particularly remarkable for the beauty and lyric flow of its choruses, the first of which is here given. It is sung by a chorus of virgins to Artemis, or Diana, the virgin huntress.

LINE 2. The mother of months, the first of the spring months.

5. nightingale. In this and the following lines the poet alludes to the Grecian story of Philomela. Tereus, a Thracian king, married Procne, an Athenian princess; later he committed an outrage on her sister Philomela, whose tongue he cut out to prevent her from revealing his crime. She painted her story, however, on a robe, and sent it to Procne, whereupon the two sisters took revenge on Tereus by killing his son, Itys, or Itylus, and serving him up at his father's table. When Tereus discovered the deed and attempted to kill the sisters, the gods interposed and changed them into birds, Procne into a swallow and Philomela into a nightingale, whose passionate song is supposed to lament her sorrows as a woman. Swinburne has written a beautiful poem, *Itylus*, on this legend.

10. Maiden most perfect, Artemis, who is also called "lady of light," being the moon goddess.

38. the oat, the pastoral flute, made out of oat straw.

41. Pan. See note on Mrs. Browning's *A Musical Instrument*, l. 1.

44. The Mænad and the Bassarid, two different names for the half-frenzied women who celebrated the orgies of Bacchus in the woods and mountains of Greece.

48. The god, Bacchus.

49. The ivy, like the vine, a plant sacred to Bacchus — the Bacchanal's. A Bacchanal was a woman worshiper of Bacchus.

A MATCH

This 'rose-leaf of a lyric' is a charming specimen of Swinburne's singing gift in the lighter vein. It would perhaps tax the ingenuity of a critic to discover a positive and definite meaning in each of the playful stanzas. The song is like that of a bird; it is a thing of pure delight in its own beauty and in the happy mood from which it springs.

ADIEUX À MARIE STUART

From early youth Swinburne had been greatly interested in the story of Mary Queen of Scots. Before he was thirty he wrote a drama, *Chastelard*, on an episode in her career, and followed this with the plays *Bothwell* and *Mary Stuart*. The poem *Adieux à Marie Stuart* was written to celebrate the conclusion of the trilogy. It is one of the simplest and strongest of Swinburne's lyrics.

17. border, the border country between Scotland and England.

24. Hermitage, a castle on the Scottish Border, where Queen Mary once visited her wounded lover, Bothwell.

30. teen, sorrow, loss.

81. In this stanza Swinburne alludes to some of the over-zealous defenders of Mary who could find nothing wrong in her conduct.

85. The reference is to Mary's enemies during her life, who, in Swinburne's opinion, harmed her less than her over zealous defenders have since done.

106. twenty years. Swinburne wrote his first play on Mary Queen of Scots about twenty years before he wrote this poem.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

Poet, essayist, and novelist, Robert Louis Stevenson is perhaps the most fascinating personality of the later nineteenth century. His love of romance and adventure, his sunny good humor, his light-hearted courage in the presence of poverty, sickness, and death, endeared him to all who knew him, and have won for him a place in the hearts of thousands who know him only through his works. Although he is usually thought

of as a novelist, he has written some very charming poetry in the old Scotch tongue of his ancestors as well as in English.

WANDERING WILLIE

This poem was written during Stevenson's long exile in the South Seas. "Almost the only complaint, even in dramatic form," says his biographer, "that he allowed himself to make." It would be hard to find another poem in the English language so full of the longing for home that marks the Scot abroad. The name is taken from an old Scotch air, "the saddest of our country tunes," said Stevenson, "which sets folks weeping in a tavern."

REQUIEM

This perfect little poem was written in a sick room. Stevenson was suffering at that time from a terrible complication of diseases; he was half blind, forbidden to speak aloud, unable to use his right hand, and in daily danger of sudden death. But his spirit was as strong and cheerful as in his happiest hours, and the poem gives expression at once to his joy in life and to his calm readiness for death. After his death these lines were inscribed upon the bronze plate that marks his mountain grave in distant Samoa.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801-1890)

Newman, one of the greatest of English preachers and theological writers, was famous in his day first as a leader in the High Church movement at Oxford, and then, under the title of Cardinal, as the English champion of the Church of Rome. He wrote not a little verse, but almost the only poem of his which lives is the lovely hymn, *Lead, Kindly Light*. It is given here as an example, too rare in English, of the hymn which is at the same time a true poem.

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-)

Kipling is probably the most widely read and generally admired poet and story-teller in the English language to-day. He was born in India, and has lived in the United States, England, and Africa. His wide knowledge of men and countries and his quick sympathy with all forms of toil and struggle, have given his verse a popularity such as few even

greater poets have attained. The one poem of his that has already established itself as a classic is the *Recessional*, written at the close of the Diamond Jubilee of Victoria's reign, the greatest pageant of worldly power ever seen since the days of the Caesars. But the purpose of the poem was not to celebrate the glory of the empire so much as to fill the hearts of Englishmen with humble and becoming reverence for the God who had brought these things to pass and whose hand could bring them down to dust again. It is a hymn such as Cromwell's Ironsides might have sung.

RECESSIONAL

The title is taken from the name given to the closing hymn of the English Church service, which is sung while the clergyman and the choir pass out of the church.

LINE 4. palm and pine. These trees symbolize the wide extent of the British dominions from the pine trees of the north to the palm of tropic lands.

16. Nineveh and Tyre, types of ancient and ruined powers: Nineveh, the capital of the great Assyrian monarchy; Tyre, the oldest of great maritime cities.

21. the Gentiles, other nations than the English, whom Kipling considers, as an old Puritan would have done, the 'chosen people.'

26. reeking tube and iron shard. The "tube" is the barrel of a cannon; the "shard" is a rather contemptuous expression for the armor of a battleship.

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